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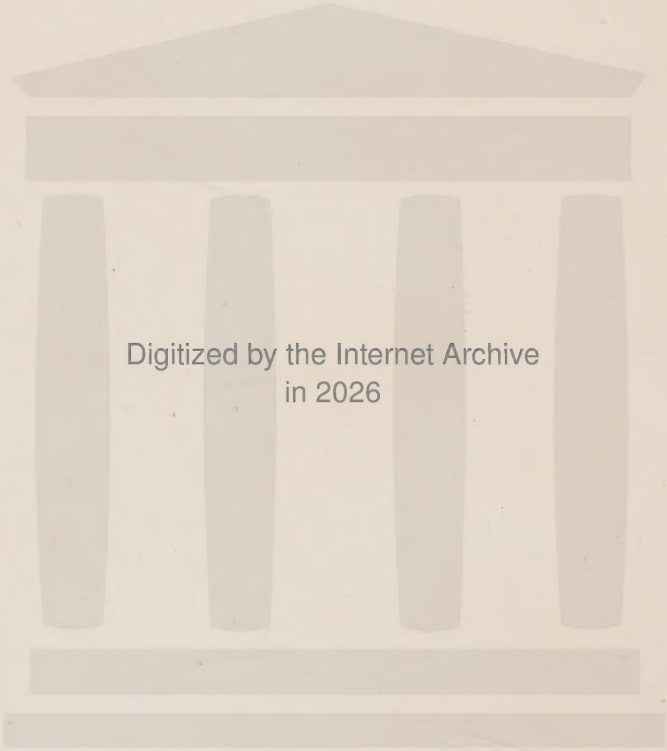
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A Literary History of Scotland

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Preface

The general scope of the following pages does not, it is conceived, require any elaborate explanation. The work is an effort to fulfil the promise of its title-page, and it is for the reader to judge how far that effort has been successful. Down to the date of the Union of the Parliaments, the author's task was a perfectly plain-sailing one, in so far as regards the choice of writers to be dealt with. Thenceforward, however, he was from time to time confronted with the question, whether a particular writer of undoubted Scottish nationality should or should not be included in what professes to be a record of Scottish literature. That question was sometimes by no means a simple one to answer, and it was not without misgivings that the resolution was ultimately adopted, to abstain from attempting anything like adequate criticism of men like James Thomson, James Boswell, and Thomas Carlyle, and to rest satisfied with little more than the bare mention of their names. The reasons which determined this course are in each case sufficiently indicated in the text. If it be thought, on the other hand, that, whatever may be said of such omissions, the last two chapters err on the side of overcrowding, there can only be urged in extenuation a desire to make the work complete in the treatment of a period as to which information is not yet so readily accessible, or at least so conveniently digested, as it will some day come to be.

No true Scot, probably, can avoid the taint of partiality in handling some of the topics which necessarily come under review in a history of his country's literature. The present writer does not venture to claim immunity from a weakness to which so many of his betters have proved themselves liable; nor can he flatter himself that he runs any serious risk of being taken for an enthusiastic partisan of the "Highflying" interest. He would fain, however, hope that no constitutional prejudice or bias has led him to the unconscious and unintentional misrepresentation of the views of men with whose temperament and habits of thought he may chance to find himself in imperfect sympathy. Conscious and deliberate misrepresentation he trusts it is needless to disclaim. For the rest, he has sought in his literary judgments to arrive at independent results, and to state them, such as they are, with firmness and candour, yet without over-emphasis or exaggeration.

Among the indispensable works of reference which have been consulted, the writer desires to single out for especial recognition the convenient and accurate *Biographical Dictionary*, in one volume, published by Messrs. W. and R. Chambers, and the same firm's *Cyclopædia of English Literature*—an old friend of his youth, and now appearing in a more valuable and attractive edition than ever. A full acknowledgment of heavy indebtedness to the *Dictionary of National Biography* is superfluous, and ought to be taken as written in the preface to every work of this character. Among books other than those of reference, substantial aid has been derived from David Irving's *Scotish Writers* and *Scotish Poetry*, and from Mr. T. F. Henderson's *Scottish Vernacular Literature*.

It remains for the author to express his hearty thanks to various friends who have assisted and encouraged him in the preparation of this volume: to Mr. Charles Whibley, who is, in a sense, its "only begetter"; to Mr. G. Gregory Smith and to Mr. George Saintsbury, Professor of Rhetoric and

English Literature in the University of Edinburgh, who have most kindly read the proofs, and favoured him with many valuable suggestions; and to Dr. Sprott, minister of North Berwick, who has read the chapters dealing with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and has communicated the benefit of his extensive reading and his intimate acquaintance with Scottish ecclesiastical history. It need scarcely, however, be said that for the opinions hereinafter expressed these gentlemen are as little responsible as they are for any blunders in fact or any slips of the press which may be detected in the course of perusal. As regards the latter class of error, the clemency of the reader may be moved, while his vigilance is stimulated, by the recollection of Archbishop Hamilton's sagacious *dictum* (*infra*, p. 132), that "thair is na buke sa perfitly prentit bot sum faultis dois eschaip in the prenting thairof." To sundry other friends who have contributed information and advice, due acknowledgment has been made in the appropriate places, and to the list of their names there fall to be added those of Mr. William Blackwood and Mr. A. E. Henderson. The staff of the Advocates' Library have, as is their custom, shown themselves remarkably attentive and officious (in the good sense of the word). Finally, it would be ungrateful and ungracious of the author not to testify to the courtesy of Mr. Unwin in granting him a very ample extension of time for the completion of a work which has occupied a much longer period than was originally bargained for.

EDINBURGH,
April 25, 1903.

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Literary History of Scotland

CHAPTER I

EARLY SCOTS POETRY: 1301–1475

THE purpose of the present work is to survey the literature of the more important part of that portion of the island of Great Britain called Scotland—a geographical and political entity whose limits it is conceived to be superfluous here to define. We are happily absolved at the outset from discussing to what branch of the human family those who are now called Scots in truth belong. Nor is it necessary to consider the race of the aborigines. According to some authorities, the Picts were emphatically Celtic; according to others, so far from being Celtic, they were not even Aryan, and the Scots were in little better case. Goidelic Celts, Brythonic Celts, Saxons, Angles, and Norsemen present themselves to us in an obscure and confused mass, all working up together, as it were (in the words of the landlord of the "Jolly Sandboys"), "in one delicious gravy." Perhaps the earliest inhabitants were Pelasgians. Nobody knows; and possibly no one need very much care.

Adventurous partisans, to be sure, have not been slow to advance conjectures for positive certainties. Historians like Mr. Freeman, and his picturesque satellite, Mr. Green, are

eloquent upon the essentially Saxon characteristics of the Scottish Lowlanders, other than the Picts of Galloway. Their speculations are rash, but at least they had some basis of fact to build upon, and their methods are models of historical research compared with those favoured by the extreme Celtic school. It is no easy matter to pin down any partisan of that faction to a plain and intelligible statement. But their process of reasoning, in so far as it can be apprehended, appears, in the long run, invariably to come to the syllogism: All Celts possess qualities *x* and *y* (imagination, a sense of the beautiful, &c.). But A possesses qualities *x* and *y*. Therefore A is a Celt. The result of such light-hearted trafficking in undistributed middles is wild talk about Sir Walter Scott having been an "English-speaking Gael."[1] Instead of making guesses at what perhaps can never be ascertained, it seems better to follow those historians whose powers of reasoning have not been paralysed by some over-mastering, though excusable, prepossession. By so doing, we shall probably reach the conclusion that at no period of Scottish history was there a violent or extensive subversion of the *status quo*. With the exception of the Lothians, there was no part of the country in which a great displacement or dispossession of the original inhabitants by invaders from the South occurred, and such displacement or dispossession as did occur in the Lothians must be referred to a comparatively early period.[2]

When we approach the question of language and culture, we stand upon surer ground than in dealing with the elusive puzzle of race. The language of that part of Scotland with which we have to do is no other than the language of the

[1] As good an exhibition of the pro-Celtic frenzy as any other is afforded by Mr. W. Sharp's introduction to *Lyra Celtica*, Edin., 1896. Mr. Matthew Arnold, it is to be feared, was the chief begetter of this variety of infatuation in our time.

[2] See Lang, *History of Scotland*, vol. i., Edin., 1900; Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. i., Cambridge, 1899; and Rait, *Relations between England and Scotland*, 1901.

North of England. Until the end of the fifteenth century, the "Scots" tongue meant Erse or Irish. It is true that the Spanish ambassador to the Court of James IV. declared that Scots varied from English as much as Aragonese from Castilian.[1] But he was doubtless unaware that the Scots dialect resembled that current in Yorkshire far more closely than the dialect of Yorkshire resembled that of Dorset.[2] And as with language, so with civilisation. The policy of Malcolm Canmore, triumphantly carried out by David I., resulted in the all but complete expulsion of Celtic culture and the Celtic system of society from Roxburghshire and the Merse, from the Lothians, from Angus and Mearns, from Aberdeenshire, from Moray—in short, from the whole of the East of Scotland up to the Moray Firth, if not further. The last serious attempt to rehabilitate Celtic notions of property and manners in Scotland ended in failure at the battle of Harlaw (1411). The issue of that hard-fought struggle is stated to have been doubtful, but Donald of the Isles returned home with his horde of "kernes and gallow-glasses." It was not until 1746 that the doom of Celtic civilisation in the territory to which it had been relegated was finally pronounced.

It is true that we find Highlanders assisting the Lowland Scots in the War of Independence. It is also true that we find Highlanders conspiring at various dates with the English crown, for a consideration, to undermine, or rather overthrow, the independence of Scotland. In other words, the magnates of the Highlands were equally ready with those of the Lowlands to intrigue against their sovereign. We cannot honestly say that the Lowlanders regarded the Highlanders as a separate

[1] Lang, *History*, i. p. 383.

[2] Murray, *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, 1873, still the great authority on the subject, though not wholly free from the pedantry which has sometimes characterised the Transactions of the Philological Society. See also the late Mr. Oliphant's *Sources of Standard English*, 1873. Mr. Freeman pronounces the Scots vernacular to be "the purest surviving form of English" (*N. C.*, v. p. 342).

and hostile race or nation. What we can say is, that, as far back as the literature of Scotland goes, the Lowlanders regarded the Highlanders with the feelings of contempt and dislike which the representative of a higher form of civilisation (as he conceives it to be) cherishes towards the representative of a lower, with whom, through local proximity, he is involuntarily brought into contact. Nor was there any diffidence in giving full expression to this frame of mind. We abstain from dwelling on the seal of the burgh of Stirling,[1] and on the testimony of Ayala.[2] These belong to the domain of history rather than of literature. But we refer, in support of our proposition, to the two stanzas from *The Buke of the Howlat*, cited later on ;[3] to the taunts hurled by Dunbar at Kennedy on account of his West Country, and therefore Celtic, origin ;[4] to the same poet's description of Erschemen dancing a "Heland padyane" in Hell at the call of Mahoun ;[5] to Montgomerie's *Answer to ane Helandmanis invective*,[6] which is certainly full of what his editor describes as "illiberal abuse" ; and to another poem by the same author, from which it is tempting to quote.[7] When the Highlander has been brought into existence at St. Peter's suggestion—

> "Quod God to the Helandman, 'Quhair wilt thow now?'
> 'I will down in the Lowland, Lord, and thair steill a kow.'
> God then be leuch, and owre the dyk lap,
> And owt of his scheith his gowly owt gatt."

The Highlander is presently discovered to have appropriated the gully, or knife, in question, whereupon St. Peter remonstrates with him on his felonious tendencies.

[1] Lang, *History*, i. p. 162. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 383. [3] *Infra*, p. 39.
[4] *The Flyting*, ll. 107–12, quoted *infra.*, p. 61. *Cf.* ll. 55 and 56. See Kennedy's retort, which is to the effect that "Irische" was the language of the country before Dunbar was born or thought of.
[5] *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins, ad fin.*
[6] Works, ed. Cranstoun, S. T. S., 1886–87, p. 220. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

"'Umff!' quo the Helandman, and swere by yon kirk,
'Sa lang as I may geir get, will I nevir wirk.'"

It appears, then, that the Lowlander regards his Highland fellow-subject as a barbarian. He indulges in all the familiar jibes about the eccentric speech and clothing, as well as about the predatory instincts, of his neighbour. The Englishman he is prepared to accept as an equal, though a dangerous, insolent, and aggressive equal.[1] But the Highlander he looks upon as an aggressive, or a sorning, and, in either case, an intolerable, inferior. It was not until after the Union of the Parliaments, at the very earliest, that this view underwent any appreciable modification, and the crowning mercy of Culloden alone made it possible for the Lowland Scot to perceive and to relish the romance and picturesqueness latent in Highland modes of life and theories of existence. With the Celtic literature of the Highlands we have here no concern. Our business is with the literature of the English-speaking Scots.

The earliest piece of Scottish poetry [2] that has descended to us is the well-known stanza on the death of Alexander III., for

[1] Compare Montgomerie's *Answer to ane Ingliss railer*, who boasted of his long pedigree. (*Works, ut sup.* p. 219.)

[2] For a general view of the subject, the following works *inter alia* may be consulted :—Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vols. i. and ii. 1895–97 ; Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, 3 vols. 1774–81 ; Irving, *Lives of the Scotish Poets*, 2 vols., Edin., 1804 ; *History of Scotish Poetry*, Edin., 1861 ; Ross, *Scottish History and Literature*, Glasgow, 1884 ; G. Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, ch. ii. Edin., 1900. An admirable *Sketch of Scottish Poetry*, by the late Professor Nichol, is prefixed to the E. E. T. S. edition of Sir David Lyndsay's *Minor Poems*, 1871. On the subject of metres, there is no greater authority than Guest, *History of English Rhythms*, ed. Skeat, 1882. As regards texts, our principal manuscript sources are (1) The *Asloan* MS., 1515, which passed some years ago into the possession of Lord Talbot de Malahide ; (2) The *Maitland* Folio, 1555–86, in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge ; and (3) the *Bannatyne* MS., 1568, in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, printed for the Hunterian Club, 1873–86.

the preservation of which we are indebted to Andrew of Wyntoun.[1] Its authorship is unknown.

> "Quhen Alysandyr oure Kyng was dede
> That Scotland led in love and le,
> Away wes sons of ale and brede,
> Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle;
> Oure gold wes changyd into lede;
> Chryst, born in to Virgynyté,
> Succour Scotland, and remede
> That stad is in perplexyté."

How far Wyntoun's version accurately reproduces the original it is, of course, impossible to say, but the lines, at all events, represent a far higher level of workmanship than the few surviving scraps of verse—mostly in ridicule of the English—which can be attributed to the era of the War of Independence or to the immediately succeeding generation.[2] These latter may perhaps be genuine specimens of "folk-song"—such ingenuous lyrics as were sung by the Scottish maidens who had no Miriam among them to give adequate utterance to their feelings of exultation.

The first figure that flits across our field of vision is the shadowy one of Thomas of Erceldoune or Earlston, commonly known as Thomas Rymour, as to whom it seems pretty safe to infer that he died before 1294.[3] Tradition has invested him with much the same attributes and powers as Merlin. Prophecy

[1] *Chronykil*, ed. Laing, vol. ii. p. 266, book vii. *ad fin.*

[2] For example:

> "Maydens of Engelonde sore may ye morne
> For that ye han loste your lemmans at Bannokesbourne
> With hevaloghe!
> What? Wende the Kynge of Engelonde
> To have gotten Scottland?
> With rombyloghe!"

[3] *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*, ed. Murray, E. E. T. S. 1875; ed. Brandl. Berlin, 1880. See also Laing's *Select Remains*, ed. 1885, p. 142. *Sir Tristrem*, ed. Kölbing, Heilbronn, 1882; ed. M'Neill, S. T. S. Edin., 1886.

was his *forte;* and his great triumph in that department was the prediction, uttered on the day before the event, of the death of Alexander III. Even if we are charitable enough to give him credit for this success, we cannot challenge the conclusion of Dr. Murray that his other efforts in vaticination are precisely analogous to the fragments of "Arthurian" prophecy, revived from time to time to suit the circumstances of every age.

The Romance and Prophecies ascribed to him is a poem in three "fyttes," in alternately rhymed octosyllabic verse, which combines fairy tale with prophecy. Here we learn of Thomas's dealings with the Queen of the Fairies. Dr. Murray has little hesitation in pronouncing that the work, as known to us, belongs to the fifteenth century. It is probable, at all events, that the hand which transcribed it was that of a man to whom the Southern English was more familiar than the Northern; and the same observation applies to *Sir Tristrem*, a metrical romance which Sir Walter Scott edited in 1804, and in regard to the authorship of which there has been much controversy. The tendency of expert opinion has, upon the whole, been unfavourable to the theory of the connection of the Rymour with the poem; but Mr. M'Neill, the latest editor, is inclined to accept the traditional view, which appears to be vouched for by a perfectly fair construction of certain expressions of Robert Mannyng of Brunne (*fl.* 1330), and by the opening lines of the work itself[1] as it appears in the Auchinleck MS., written early in the fourteenth century. The poem contains over 3,000 lines, and is written in a stanza of eleven lines, with a "bob-wheel" beginning at the ninth, the previous eight lines being alternately rhymed sixes: as thus, *ab ab ab ab cbc.* Alliteration is employed, though not slavishly. The piece is highly interesting

[1] "I was a[t Erceldoune],
With Tomas spak y thare;
Ther herd y rede in roune
Who Tristrem gat and bare."

as the first effort in English to render in verse the immortal story of Tristram and Ysonde,[1] but it must be admitted to be the feeblest and least satisfactory of the attempts made by English writers of eminence to present that narrative in a poetical form.

More mysterious even than "true Thomas" is "Huchown of the Awle Ryale," round whose identity the din of battle has been as though Mr. Oldbuck and Sir Arthur Wardour were taking part in the fray.[2] What admitted and ascertained facts have the eager combatants to go upon?

In the first place, Andrew of Wyntoun makes reference to "Huchown off the Awle Ryale," who, he declares, with regard to a particular matter,

> "In till his *Gest Hystorialle*
> Has tretyd this mar cwnnandly
> Than suffycyand to pronowns am I." [3]

A few lines further on, he returns to him, urging Huchown's authority in extenuation of an alleged mistake on his own part :—

> "And men off gud discretyowne
> Suld excuse and love Huchowne,
> That cunnand was in literature.
> He made the *Gret Gest off Arthure*
> And the *Awntyre off Gawane*
> The *Pystyll* als *off Swete Susane.*
> He was curyws in hys style,
> Fayre off facund and subtille,
> And ay to plesans and delyte
> Made in metyre mete his dyte,
> Lytill or nowcht nevyrtheles
> Waverand fra the suthfastness." [4]

---

[1] There was a French version of the tale already in existence, also by a Thomas, the date of which is *circ.* 1170.

[2] See Neilson, *Huchown of the Awle Ryale,* Glasgow, 1902 ; *Athenæum,* 1900–1901.

[3] *Orygynalė Cronykıl,* bk. v., ll. 4294–96.

[4] *Ibid.* ll. 4321–32.

It may be explained that the *Pystyll off Swete Susane*, a religious narrative poem, of 364 lines in alliterative rhymed verse, has come down to us under that name; that the *Gest Hystorialle* or *Gret Gest off Arthure* is possibly to be identified with the *Morte Arthure*, a purely alliterative metrical romance of 4,346 lines; and that the *Awntyre off Gawane* is believed by some to be *Gawayne and the Green Knight*, and by others to be the *Awntyrs of Arthure*, both rhymed alliterative romances, the former of 2,530, the latter of 715 lines.[1]

In the second place, Dunbar in his *Lament for the Makaris*, after enumerating Chaucer, the Monk of Bury, and Gower as instances of poets whom death "hes done petuously devour," proceeds to supplement his melancholy catalogue as follows :—

> "The gude Syr Hew of Eglintoun,
> And eik, Heryot and Wyntoun,
> He hes tane out of this cuntre;
> Timor mortis conturbat me."

Now, of Sir Hew of Eglinton we know that he was born, in all probability, prior to 1321; that he was a person of considerable importance in his day; that he was hand-in-glove with the Steward of Scotland, afterwards Robert II., whose sister he married *en secondes noces* in or about 1360; that he more than once represented the King of Scots at the Court of England; that he was conjoined with John Barbour as auditor of the Exchequer; that he died about the end of 1376; and that he was buried in the Choir of Kilwinning Abbey. What poems Sir Hew wrote, Dunbar omits to tell us, nor do we know for certain from any other source of information.

Here, then, we are confronted with certain poems attributed to a person, Huchown, as to whose personality and history we are wholly in the dark; and a poet, Sir Hew of Eglinton, worthy

[1] *Morte Arthure*, ed. Brock, E. E. T. S., 1865; ed. Mrs. Banks, 1900; *Gawayne and the Green Knight*, ed. Madden, Bannatyne Club, 1838; ed. Morris, E. E. T. S., 1864; *Awntyrs of Arthure* (together with the *Pistyll of Susane*) in *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, ed. Amours, S. T. S., Edin., 1897.

to be named in the same breath with Chaucer and Gower, as to whose writings we are wholly in the dark. When it is recollected that Huchown is merely a variant of the name of Hugh or Hew, and that the "Awle Ryale" seems to be by no means a far-fetched rendering of "*aula regis*," the king's palace, we cannot wonder that Huchown has been conjectured by many to be no other than Sir Hew of Eglinton.

Mr. Neilson has made the rehabilitation of Huchown his peculiar care, and by a train of argument extraordinarily elaborate, ingenious, and learned, has sought to prove that many poems whose authorship has hitherto remained in doubt are properly to be attributed to that "makar." We cannot here follow the various steps in a long process of reasoning, of which perhaps the worst that can be said is that it is almost too plausible and complete.[1] If Mr. Neilson is right, we must ascribe to Huchown, in addition to the poems already adverted to, *The Wars of Alexander*,[2] an alliterative translation from the Latin; *The Destruction of Troy*,[3] an alliterative translation from the Latin version of Guido de Colonna (1287); *Titus and Vespasian*,[4] an alliterative poem drawn from various sources; *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*,[5] *Wynnere and Wastoure*,[5] and *Erkenwald*,[6] all three alliterative allegories; to say nothing of *The Pearl*,[7] a rhymed alliterative allegory, which is one of the finest achievements of its age in literature, and *Cleanness* and *Patience*,[8] which have alliteration without rhyme.[9]

[1] It must suffice to note that the basis of his argument is the MS. T. 4. 1. in the Hunterian Library in Glasgow; and that in corroboration he adduces MS. U. 7. 25, which he believes to be no less interesting a document than Huchown's own copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

[2] Ed. Skeat, E. E. T. S., 1886. [3] E. E. T. S., 1869–74.

[4] Ed. Steffler, Marburg, 1891. [5] Ed. Gollancz, Roxburghe Club, 1897.

[6] Ed. Horstmann, Heilbronn, 1881. [7] Ed. Gollancz, 1891.

[8] *Early English Alliterative Poems*, ed. Morris, E. E. T. S., 1864.

[9] I must not forget *Golagros and Gawayne*, an alliterative rhymed historical romance, which it has been customary to attribute to Clerk of Tranent, who flourished a century later. See *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, ed. Amours, S. T. S., 1897.

To test Mr. Neilson's conclusions would occupy a tolerable portion of an expert's lifetime; and the only criticism which the present writer would presume to offer of his methods is that he appears somewhat to ignore the "common stock" of material available to all mediæval poets, and to ride somewhat too hard the parallel passage hobby,[1] upon the staying power of which, indeed, an important part of his argument depends. In the early ages of poetry, the bard is compelled to eke out his line by some formal and conventional phrase, such as "soothly to say," or "as trew men me tald," or "as the book tells." We see the same necessity succumbed to in the *clichés* of modern amateur and illiterate versifiers, or of inexpert *improvisatori*.[2] Huchown, it need scarcely be said, was infinitely more accomplished than such persons. But, when alliteration is the trick of the craft, the craftsman becomes even more tied down than in dealing with rhyme to formulæ, to strings of epithets, to stereotyped verbs. And without venturing seriously to impugn the results at which Mr. Neilson has arrived, we may be allowed to hazard the opinion that, while in some instances he has brought to light really pregnant coincidences, in others the resemblances which he builds upon can suggest no valid inference whatever.

Even if we assume that Mr. Neilson's Huchown canon is sound (and it were idle to deny that there is a very great deal to be said in its favour), it does not, of course, follow that Huchown was Sir Hugh, and the contention that he was has been warmly combated. The chief arguments against the affirmative have been based upon the entire absence

[1] There is an amusing instance on p. 61. Minot's "When thai sailed westward" is paralleled with "the wind rises out of the west" of the *Morte Arthur*. The fallacy is seldom so palpable, but in many cases the thread of comparison is strained to breaking. I observe that the point is also taken by a reviewer of Mr. Neilson's work in the *Athenæum*, November 22, 1902.

[2] Compare the "I think you'll confess," and similar tags, by dint of which the rude poet of the music-halls used, twenty years ago, to achieve the effect of rhyme.

from the poems attributed to him of any hint of Scottish patriotism, and upon the peculiarities of the dialect in which these poems are written.

The fact upon which the first point is made must be frankly admitted. Not only is there no Scottish bias about Huchown, but he actually goes out of his way to celebrate the achievements of the English king. Incidents of the siege of Calais (so Mr. Neilson tells us) are incorporated in the *Titus;* while the battle of Creçy supplies the military, and the sea-fight with the Spaniards off Winchelsea the naval, details of the *Morte Arthure*. Hence, it is inferred by some, Huchown must have been an Englishman. As against this we may urge that Huchown is never claimed by any English poet for a brother bard ; and when we remember that the function of Sir Hugh in the foreign politics of his country was to promote the English alliance, and to cement what journalists used to call an *entente cordiale* with the English court, we cannot be surprised that in his writings he should have seized the opportunity of being complimentary to Edward III. Perhaps Huchown was the first illustrious specimen of that much-vilified person, the Anglicised Scot.

From the language of his poems it is, unluckily, impossible to deduce anything. The philologists are here all at sea. Some roundly affirm that it is Northern English, filtered through the medium of a Southern scribe. Others are equally positive that it is West Midland English, filtered through the medium of a Northern scribe.[1] Some, in other words, declare that Huchown was a Mr. Barrie, transcribed, say, by a Mr. Hardy, others that he was a Mr. Hardy transcribed by a Mr. Barrie. Where doctors thus differ, it is not for ordinary persons to pronounce an opinion. We may content ourselves with pointing out that the presence of Southern elements, even in a considerable degree, in

[1] Mr. Pollard assures us that *Gawayne and the Grene Knight* is in the Lancashire dialect (*Chambers's Cycl. of Literature*, 1901, i. 53).

Huchown's poems, is not conclusive against his identity with a Scottish Sir Hew. It is unnecessary to conjecture that the court of King Robert II. tried to imitate English speech and English ways. It is enough that Sir Hew is believed to have been educated in England, and certainly spent a considerable time there during part of his life. It seems not impossible, moreover, that Huchown's style and language are consciously and deliberately archaic and peculiar. Alliteration, though highly popular during the third quarter of the fourteenth century, to which the Huchown poems belong, was a doomed device; and for the recognised literary medium of the day in verse we must turn to the pages of Barbour.

The poems of Sir Hew (for meanwhile the hypothesis so ably championed by Mr. Neilson may be provisionally accepted in default of a better[1]) may be classified into historical, like the *Alexander* or the *Troy*, chivalrous, like the *Gawayne* romances, allegorical, like the *Parlement*, and religious, like the *Pystyll of Susane*. That he was a poet in the true sense of the term is unquestionable; though we cannot perhaps join in the rhapsodies in which Mr. Neilson, with the amiable partiality characteristic of the true antiquary, is apt to indulge. No doubt his pen was "superbly appointed"; no doubt he possessed "a glorious intellect"; but, at the risk of being thought cold, we must decline to subscribe to the opinion that he "ranks among the great formative forces in the literature of the English tongue," and that "no less than Chaucer he set his seal for ever on the literary art of his own generation and of the generations to follow." Unity of plot was certainly not his strong point, and his copious moralising and didactic vein is the reverse of exhilarating. His two best pieces (for in the absence of sub-

[1] It is right to mention that Mr. Amours, the learned editor of the S. T. S. collection of *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, does not believe in the identity of Sir Hew and Huchown. No more does Mr. Henry Bradley, whose suggestion that the "Awle Ryale"=Oriel College, Oxford, appears the reverse of plausible.

stantial evidence we shall assume the *Pearl* to be none of his) are probably the *Morte Arthure* and the *Pystyll of Swete Susane*, the latter being a paraphrase of the story of Susanna and the elders, in stanzas of thirteen lines, rhymed *ab ab ab ab c d d d c*. The stanza which describes the leavetaking of Joachim and Susanna is probably the best known passage from all Huchown's works; but it gives so favourable a notion of his powers that there can be no harm in once more reproducing it:—

> "She fell down flat on the floor, her fere when she found,
> Carped to him kindly, as she full well couthe:
> 'I wis I thee wrathed never at my witand,
> Neither in word nor in work, in eld nor in youth.'
> She cowered up on her knees and kissed his hand—
> 'For I am damned, I not dare disparage thy mouth.'
> Was never more sorrowful segge by sea nor by sand;
> Ne never a sorrier sight by north ne by south.
> Then there
> They took the fetters off her feet,
> And ever he kissed that sweet.
> 'In other worlds shall we meet,'
> Said he no mair."[1]

A greater contrast to the literary ideals and methods of Huchown can scarcely be conceived than that presented by those of his contemporary and fellow-auditor of Exchequer, John Barbour (1316?–96), Archdeacon of Aberdeen. Mr. Neilson, indeed, finds traces in Barbour's work of the intellectual ascendancy of Huchown.[2] I confess I can see none, and fail to find the passages produced in evidence by Mr. Neilson in the least convincing. Besides a *Brut*, a Stuart genealogy, and the *Brus*, upon which last Barbour's fame almost entirely depends, there have been attributed to him (erroneously, according to Mr. Skeat and Mr. Metcalfe)

[1] From *The Pystyll of Swete Susane*, ll. 248–60.
[2] *Chambers's Cycl. of English Lit.*, 1901, i. p. 179.

certain *Legends of the Saints*,[1] and some fragments of a *Troy* poem, translated, like Huchown's, from Guido.[2] It is also suggested by Mr. Neilson that to him we owe *The Buik of Alexander the Great*, the manuscript of which assigns it to the year 1438. To enable this theory to hold good, it has to be assumed that that date is erroneous, and that 1378, or some such other year, must be substituted for it. To the present writer it seems that the resemblances in phrase and tone between *The Buik of Alexander* and the *Brus* may be adequately accounted for by the hypothesis that the former was the work of an enthusiastic disciple of the Archdeacon, habituated to and mindful of his master's modes of thought and expression. To be dogmatic on the subject were presumptuous. It may be, after all, that the text of the *Brus* was "faked" by some not unskilful scribe in the fifteenth century.[3]

The *Brus* (1376)[4] is a narrative in rhymed octosyllabics extending to nearly 14,000 lines, and divided into twenty books, the subject being the exploits of the remarkable man who at once vindicated the independence of Scotland, and established himself securely on the Scottish throne. Barbour calls it a romance, and there are statements in it manifestly erroneous (the confusion between the two Bruces, grandfather and grandson, is the most notorious instance), as well as others which historical scepticism would bid us pause before accepting. But, on the whole, *pace* Sir Herbert Maxwell, there is no reason to question his substantial accuracy and good faith; and he is the source whence we derive our knowledge of all those pleasing and picturesque traits in the career of King Robert I., which are, or ought to be, familiar to every child in

[1] Ed. Metcalfe, S. T. S., 1896. They run to over 33,000 lines in octosyllabic metre.

[2] Ed. Horstmann, 1881–82.

[3] But see Brown, *The Wallace and the Bruce Re-studied*, Bonn, 1900; *Athenæum*, Nov., 1900—Feb., 1901.

[4] Ed. Innes, Spalding Club, 1856; ed. Skeat, S. T. S., 1894. See Jusserand, *Literary History of the English People*, 1895, i. 361, *et seq.*

Scotland. The *Brus* is better entitled than any other work to be called the national epic.

That there should be a want of artistic unity about the poem as a whole was an almost inevitable consequence of Barbour's choice of a subject. He cannot be said to be strong in the matter of construction. It is in episodes rather than in plot that he shows what he can do; and his episodes are truly admirable. There he shows fire, enthusiasm, "gusto"; yet his fervent patriotism is never disfigured by acerbity. He is astonishingly fair to the other side, and displays a warm appreciation of chivalry and courtesy wherever he finds them. Nevertheless there is no touch of sentimentality or self-consciousness about him; and the simplicity and dignity that mark a noble spirit are reflected in his style. He is never "aureate," and his best passages are distinguished by an unaffected straightforwardness which is more impressive than the most elaborate ornamentation. His apostrophe to Freedom is famous :—

> "A! fredome is a noble thing
> Fredome mayss man to haiff liking;
> Fredome all solace to man giffis:
> He levys at ess that frely levys!
> A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
> Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
> Gyff fredome failzhe; for fre liking
> Is zharnyt our all othir thing." [1]

So it opens, concluding with a curious demonstration that, upon the whole, to be a slave is an even more grievous and objectionable thing than to be a married man.

Barbour's comments upon the events and actions he narrates are usually shrewd and to the point. He saw life steadily, and would not have dissented from the view that virtue is a happy

[1] *The Bruce*, bk. i. ll. 225–32.

mean. So at least he regards the essential quality of courage, with respect to which he tells us :—

> "Vorschip extremyteis has twa ;
> Fule-hardyment the formast is,
> And the tothir is cowardiss,
> And thai ar bath for to forsak.
> Fule-hardyment will all undertak,
> Als weill thingis to leiff as ta ;
> Bot cowardiss dois na thing sua,
> Bot uterly forsakis all ;
> And that war voundir for to fall,
> Na war falt of discrecione.
> For-thi has vorschip sic renoune,
> That it is mene betuix thai twa,
> And takis that is till undirta,
> And levis that is to leif : for it
> Has so gret varnasyng of wit,
> That it all peralis weill can se,
> And all avantagis that may be." [1]

The mixture of daring and policy which he saw exemplified in his hero must have possessed a strong attraction for him. And it is not surprising to find in this connection that he was blessed with a sense of humour, not, perhaps, very highly developed, but genuine and kindly enough. Here is an incident in the harrying of the Lothians which seems to have appealed to him :—

> "And thai of the host that falit met,
> Quhen thai saw that thai mycht nocht get
> Thair vittalis to thame by the se,
> Than send thai furth a gret menzhe
> For till forray all Lowdiane ;
> Bot cattell haf thai fundyn nane,
> Outane a kow that wes haltand,
> That in Tranentis corne thai fand ;
> Thai broucht hir till thair hoost agane.

[1] *The Bruce*, bk. vi. ll. 336–52.

And quhen the erll of Warane
That cow saw anerly cum swa,
He askit, 'Gif thai gat no ma?'
And thai haf said all till him, 'Nay.'
'Than, certis,' said he, 'I dar say
This is the derrest beiff that I
Saw evir yeit; for sekirly
It cost ane thousand pund and mar.'" [1]

The finest passages in the *Brus* are justly considered to be those which deal with the battle of Bannockburn, the story of which is recounted with great minuteness of detail, and with extraordinary persistency of animation and high emotion. Barbour is admitted to have been a past-master in the theory, though not in the practice, of the art of war, and there can be no doubt that Scott had him before his eyes, not only in the *Lord of the Isles*, where he chose the same subject as his predecessor, but also in the glorious battle-piece of *Marmion*. In the Bannockburn books (xi. to xiii.) the most celebrated episode is the single combat between Bruce and Sir Henry de Bohun. Extracts from the passage which describes this momentous duel may be found in most of the works on Scottish literature in which Barbour is fully dealt with. I, therefore, select in preference, to illustrate Barbour at his best or next best, the lines which describe the King's deathbed, and his memorable Commission to "the good Lord of Douglas":—

"'Lordingis,' he said, 'swa is it gane
With me, that thar is nocht bot ane,
That is, the ded, withouten dreid,
That ilk man mon thole on neid.
And I thank God that hass me sent
Spass in this liff me till repent.
For throu me and my warraying
Of blud thar hass beyne gret spilling,

---

[1] *The Bruce*, bk. xviii. ll. 269–85.

Quhar mony sakless man was slayne ;
Tharfor this seknes and this payne
I tak in thank for my trespass.
And my hert fyschit fermly wass,
Quhen I was in prosperite,
Of my synnys till savit be,
To travel apon Goddis fayis.
And sen he now me till hym tais,
That the body may on na viss
Fulfill that the hert can deviss,
I wald the hert war thiddir sent,
Quhar-in consavit wes that entent.
Tharfor I pray yow evir-ilkane,
That yhe amang yow cheiss me ane
That be honest, wiss, and wicht,
And of his hand ane nobill knycht,
On Goddis fayis myne hert to bere,
Quhen saull and corss disseverit er.
For I wald it war worthely
Broucht thar, sen God will nocht that I
Have power thiddirward till ga.'" [1]

After deliberation the Lords resolve that the "douchty lord Dowglass, Best schapen for that travell was," and tell this to the king, who is delighted with their choice.

"And quhen the gud Lord of Dowglass
Wist at the kyng thus spokyn hass,
He com and knelit to the kyng,
And on this viss maid him thanking.
'I thank yow gretly, lorde,' said he,
'Of mony large and gret bounte
That ye have done till me feill siss,
Sen first I come to your serviss.
Bot our all thing I mak thanking
That yhe so digne and worthy thing
As your hert, that illwmynyt wes
Of all bounte and worthynes,
Will that I in my zeemsell tak,
For yow, schir, will I blithly mak

---

[1] *The Bruce*, bk. xx. ll. 167–95.

> This travell, gif God will me gif
> Laser and space so lange till liff.'
> The kyng him thankit tendirly ;
> Thar wes nane in that cumpany
> That thai ne wepit for pite ;
> Thair cher anoyus wes to se." [1]

The passage breathes a quieter spirit than the battle-scenes to which it forms a noble and appropriate sequel ; but no one who reads it will probably care to deny that the man who wrote it was a genuine poet.

The width of the gulf which separates the chronicler who is also a poet, from the chronicler who is not, could not be better emphasised than by an immediate transition from Barbour to Andrew of Wyntoun. That useful, though far from inspiring, person (one had almost whispered "hack") became Prior of St. Serf's Inch, in Lochleven, in 1395, and is believed to have died about thirty years later. His *Orygynale Chronykil* [2] is usually assigned to the year 1424. It is written like the *Brus* in the octosyllabic couplet.

"Clerkis," so Wyntoun informs us, in the Prologue to book vi.—

> "Clerkis sayis that prolixyté,
> That langsumnes may callyd be,
> Gendrys leth mare than delyte." [3]

A very true observation, as Wyntoun himself most signally proves. His *Chronykil* is divided into nine books (in honour of the nine orders of the Holy Angels), and goes back to the very beginning of things. Hence the epithet *Orygynale*. He was a keen patriot, and his object (or one of his objects) was to trace the Scottish nation back to the ancestor of all mankind.

[1] *The Bruce*, bk. xx. ll. 219–38.

[2] Ed. Macpherson, Edin., 1795 ; ed. Laing, 3 vols., Edin., 1872–79. Macpherson's preface is still the best introduction to the study of Wyntoun.

[3] *Chronykil*, ed. Laing, vol. ii. p. 63, Prologue to Book IV., ll. 1–3.

As an historian, he may be disregarded in reference to the earlier portion of his work. When he comes to real Scottish history he may be credulous, but he cannot be neglected or thrust aside. He professes (doubtless with truth) to have consulted MS. authorities, which have now disappeared; and, more especially with regard to ecclesiastical history, the information with which he supplies us is full, and probably trustworthy. It was one of his weaknesses (as compared with Barbour, upon whom he draws freely for his "period") that he was too much of the cleric, and too little of the man of the world. He is the original source of the three weird sisters who tempt Macbeth, by their greeting or chance remarks, to kill his uncle Duncan. Yet in his eyes Macbeth appears to be excused for this piece of villany, because subsequently—

> "All tyme oysyd he to wyrk
> Profytably for Haly Kyrke."

Wyntoun, though he believed Macbeth to have been a successful king, was not aware that the story with which, through Boece and Holinshed, he furnished Shakespeare, will not stand investigation.

We do not say that there may not be passages in Wyntoun in which he rises to the height of his great argument. But they are assuredly few and far between. Most of his verse, to be quite frank, is doggerel; and the passage we present is chiefly interesting because it introduces us, without apology or qualification, to our old friend "perfidious Albion." It describes the capture of the future James I., *en route* for France, by the English, off the Bass Rock.

> "It is off Inglis natioune
> The commone kend conditioune
> Off Trewis the wertew to foryett,
> Quhen thai will thaim for wynnyng set,
> And rekles of gud faith to be,
> Quhare thai can thare advantage se;

Thair may na band be maid sa ferm,
Than thai can mak thare will thare term.
Set thare be contrare write, wyth seile,
It is thare vice to be oure lele.
This ilke schip was tane, but dout,
Or evir this Trew wes endit out.
In it wes nane, that than suld be
Be ony lauch enpresowné,
Bot as symply on thare wis
Marchandis pass in marchandis;
Na thare wes fundyn nakyn gere
Off wapynnis, or armowris maid for were,
That mycht be knawyn off walew
Agane the wertewis of the trewe.
Oure Kingis sone yeit nevyrtheles
In to that schip thare takyn wes.
Off him the Ynglis men ware blith,
And efftyr that, they had hym swyth
Till Henry King off Yngland
The Ferd, intill it than regnand.
He hym resavit with honesté,
And welle gert hym tretit be.
And the Erle of Orknay
Wes frethit thare to pass his way,
And yong Alexandir of Setone,
That efftyr Lord wes off Gordown,
Than ordanyt wyth oure Prynce to pas,
In that schip tane wyth hym was,
Till cum hame amang the lave
Ynglis men ful leve hym gave.
Bot oure Prince behovit thare still
Bide the King off Ynglandis will:
And William Giffarte that sqwyare;
Bot few ma than bad wyth hym thare."[1]

It can hardly be denied that the effect is eminently monotonous and prosaic.

After the beginning of the fifteenth century a new note is heard in Scottish poetry. It is not the archaic note of Huchown; nor is it the unsophisticated note of Barbour.

[1] *Chronykil*, ed. Laing, vol. iii. bk. ix. ll. 2671–710.

It comes from England, and it comes from Chaucer, to whose genius the Scottish poets for a century and a half were eager (as they well might be) to pay their tribute of respect and admiration.

We live in an age partly sceptical, partly credulous; and it is natural that, when Bacon is believed by many to have written the plays of Shakespeare, the authorship of *The Kingis Quair*[1] [Book] should have been thought by a few to be open to doubt. We do not, indeed, rank the arguments against the traditional view in the latter case in the same class with the considerations advanced in the former. Those who deny that *The Kingis Quair* is the work of James I. are people who know what they are talking about. The Baconians, in the matter of ratiocination or erudition, are, if we may venture so to call them, the merest cyphers. But the anti-Jacobites have failed, in so far as the present writer can judge, to prove their negative, and to upset the testimony of tradition, of John Major, and of the MS. of the poem in the Bodleian.[2]

We shall, therefore, assume that the author of *The Kingis Quair* was that most romantic and effective of all the Stuarts, James I., who was born in 1394, was kidnapped by the King of England in 1406, languished in captivity until 1424, and after reigning over his people for thirteen years, was assassinated at Perth in 1437. It may never be legitimate to read into a poet's verse the facts of his life, yet there is a strong temptation to regard *The Kingis Quair*, not as allegory pure and simple, but, as a reproduction of the author's own experience when, looking down from the

[1] Ed. Skeat, S. T. S., 1884. Brown, *The Authorship of the Kingis Quair*, 1896; Rait, *The Kingis Quaire and the New Criticism*, 1898; and above all Jusserand, *Jacques Premier d'Écosse: Fut-il Poète? Étude sur l'authenticité*, &c., Paris, 1897.

[2] An extremely lucid statement of the case on both sides will be found in Mr. Henderson's *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, 1898, pp. 95, *et seq.* Mr. Henderson, it should be said, is strong for the royal authorship.

window of one of his prisons, he first set eyes upon his future bride, Lady Joan Beaufort.

The Kingis Quair (1423) consists of some 1,400 lines in stanzas of seven lines, rhymed thus: *ab ab bcc*, and has been well described by Major as "*artificiosus libellus*." Conscious art is palpable in every word and phrase, and the very language is non-natural. James was not taken captive until he had attained an age at which the Northern English had become thoroughly ingrained in his brain and tongue. The English of London and Windsor—the English which was now fairly establishing itself as the standard dialect of England—might modify, but could not eradicate, the peculiarities of his Northern speech. His *Ballad of Good Counsel*, included in his edition by Professor Skeat, is good Northern English. But his literary models—Chaucer and Gower,[1] to whose "impnis" (hymns = poems) he recommends his "buk" in its closing stanza—used the London English as their language. The result in *The King's Quair* is a dialect which is neither one thing nor another; a dialect purely artificial, as Professor Skeat puts it, and such as no man or woman ever spoke. The highly artificial character of the poem may, in the age which witnessed its production, have secured the admiration of connoisseurs. That James was aware of and admired the peculiar technique and methods of his "maisteris dere" is obvious enough. And he might have appealed to the taste or his time, not by reason of any originality, but in virtue of his superlative skill in playing a game in which performers of no mean qualifications were taking an active part.

Modern admiration of *The Kingis Quair* is based on no such ground. That it belongs to the same school as *The Flower and The Leaf* and *The Court of Love* the most dense can scarce help seeing; nor would the veriest niggard in praise

[1] "Superlative as poets laureate,
In moralitee and eloquence ornate."

deny these poems high merit. But *The Kingis Quair* is admirable, not because it is a superior exercise (which it certainly is) in the same kind, nor because it is free from the occasional lapses into the commonplace, or even the ludicrous, which may be detected in its models. *The Kingis Quair* is essentially one of those poems which compel admiration absolute, and not merely admiration comparative. The dreams and reflections of the sleepless recluse who, chancing to cast down his eyes, beholds his mistress in the garden, so that "his hert, his will, his nature, and his mind" are "changit clene ryght in another kind," make too direct and imperative an appeal to the human heart to be brushed aside by the strangeness of his modes of thought. The Cupids and the Venuses so dear to the Middle Ages may mean little for us, and we may find the caprices of Fortune, and the inscrutable movements of her wheel, a subject too hackneyed to admit of profitable exposition. But in reading *The Kingis Quair* all sense of the incongruity or distastefulness of these and the like devices disappears before the passionate ardour, the noble emotion, the chivalrous feeling, which are manifest in every line. Rarely indeed has the rapture of the exultant lover, assured of success in an honourable suit, been more triumphantly expressed than in these lines :—

"Blissit mot be the heyë goddis all,
So fair that glitteren in the firmament!
And blissit be thare myght celestiall,
That have convoyit hale, with one assent.
My lufe, and to so glade a consequent!
And thankit be fortunys exiltree
And quhele, that thus so wele has quhirlit me.

Thankit mot be, and fair and lufe befall
The nychtingale, that, with so gud entent,
Sang thare of lufe the notis suete and small,
Quhair my fair hertis lady was present,
Hir with to glad, or that sche forthir went!
And thou gerafloure, mot i-thankit be
All othir flouris for the lufe of the!

And thankit be the fairë castell wall,
Quhare as I quhilom lukit furth and lent.
Thankit mot be the sanctis marciall,
That me first causit hath this accident.
Thankit mot be the grenë bewis bent,
Throu quhom, and under, first fortunyt me
My hertis hele and my comfort to be.

For to the presence suete and delitable,
Rycht of this floure that full is of plesance,
By processe and by menys favorable,
First of the blisfull goddis purveyance,
And syne throu long and trew contynuance
Of veray faith, in lufe and trew service,
I cum am, and yit forthir in this wise.

Unworthy, lo, bot onely of hir grace,
In lufis yok, that esy is and sure,
In guerdoun eke of all my lufis space,
She hath me tak, hir humble creature.
And thus befell my blissfull aventure,
In youth of lufe, that now, from day to day,
Flourith ay newe, and yit forthir, I say." [1]

The Middle Ages may be a favourite subject of ridicule (in common with the age of Homer or the age of Plato) with the ignorant and the purse-proud ; but the wealth of all the millionaires in all the world cannot purchase such poetry as this.

In addition to the poem his description of which so aptly corresponds with *The Kingis Quair*, Major ascribes to James I. a "*cantilena*," *Yas Sen*, which has never been satisfactorily identified, and another poem (to which he applies the epithets *jucundus* and *artificiosus*), *At Beltayne*, which, it seems scarcely possible to doubt, is *Peblis to the Play*.[2] The style and tone of that amusing piece are, indeed, vastly different from those of *The Kingis Quair*. Hence many competent

[1] *The Kingis Quair*, stt. 189–93.
[2] The opening line of *Peblis* is "At Beltane quhen ilk bodie bownis."

critics, including Mr. Skeat, have been unwilling—or unable—to believe that it is rightly attributed to James. A theory has been started (based upon an extremely obscure sentence of Major's) that *Peblis*, as we know it, is merely a parody upon the original, and doubtless more refined, poem of the same name. Closely connected with this question is the problem of the authorship of *Christis Kirk on the Green*,[1] which the great body of tradition concurs with Bannatyne in ascribing to James also. There is indeed a certain amount of tradition to the effect that James V., a very different person, was the author, and this hypothesis has been welcomed by those who have rejected the first James, all the more warmly that the character of the "gude man of Ballengiech" appears more consonant with the free and joyous nature of the work than that of his progenitor. In such cases it is unwise to be too positive, but we may be content to follow the high authority of Mr. Henderson, who maintains the earlier authorship both of *Peblis* and of *Christis Kirk*, a poem of precisely the same type, though confessedly posterior in date. The argument from the turn of the King's genius, as exhibited in his *Quair*, is dangerous, for it proves too much. It would conclusively prove, for example, that Cowper did not write *John Gilpin*. Nor is there anything in the language or versification of the poems to fix them to the sixteenth instead of to the fifteenth century.

The poems themselves, apart from their authorship, are of capital importance in Scottish literature as setting a fashion which was dutifully followed by the Scots poets down to the author of *Anster Fair*. They give a partly descriptive, partly satirical account of popular manners, tinctured with the rough and sardonic humour which, in an exaggerated and almost wholly detestable form, is one of the less pleasing characteristics of Smollett's heroes. The subject of the one is the town of

[1] Both *Peblis* and *Christis Kirk* will be found in almost any collection of old Scottish poetry.

Peebles (proverbially the abode of "pleasure") at fair-time, when every one resorts to it for a "ploy," or play, and the subject of the other is a very similar one—a rural village *en fête*, with abundance of noise and fighting and breaking of heads to finish up with. We see the same class of subject handled in exactly the same way in the *Blythsome Bridal*, in Fergusson's *Leith Races*, and in Burns's *Halloween* and *Holy Fair*. Alliteration is used by no means sparingly, and in form, as Mr. Henderson well says,[1] *Peblis* and *Christis Kirk* form "a curious blend of the old ballad and the alliterative romance." The stanza consists of eight lines of "double common metre" (eights and sixes) *plus* a bob-wheel, the "bob" being of two syllables,[2] two rhymes sufficing for the conduct of the whole stanza. The following extract may convey a tolerably adequate impression of the manner and spirit of two noteworthy performances :—

"To dans thir damysellis thame dicht,
Thir lassis licht of laitis,
Thair gluvis wes of the raffel rycht,
Thair schone wes of the straitis ;
Thair kirtillis wer of lynkome licht,
Weil prest with mony plaitis.
They wer so nyss quhen men thame nicht,
They squealit lyk ony gaitis
So lowd
At Chrystis kirk of the grene that day.

Of all thir madynis myld as meid
Wes nane so gympt as Gillie,
As ony ross her rude was reid,
Her lyre was lyk the lillie :

[1] *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, p. 111.

[2] "The wheel is the return of a peculiar rhythm at the end of each stanza. In its simplest form it consists of two short lines rhyming with each other. The bobwheel is a wheel beginning with a short abrupt line or bob" (Henderson, *ut sup.* p. 29).

Fow yellow yellow wes hir head,
But scho of lufe was sillie,
Thocht all her kin had sworn hir deid,
Scho wald haif bot sweit Willie,
Allone,
At Chrystis kirk of the grene.

Scho skornit Jock and skraipit at him
And mvrionit him with mokkis;
He wald haif luvit, scho wald nocht lat him,
For all hir yalow lokkis;
He chereist hir, scho bad ga chat him,
Scho compt him nocht twa clokkis;
So schamefully his schort goun set him
His lymmis was lyk twa rokkis,
Scho said,
At Chrystis kirk of the grene."

There is certainly little trace in either *Peblis* or *Christis Kirk* of the Chaucerian influence predominant in *The Kingis Quair*.[1] But the English contagion spread from the throne downwards, and the works of Robert Henryson[2] (1425?–1506?) bear the stamp of Chaucer no less certainly than does the masterpiece of the King. Henryson is said, on the title-page of the earliest edition of his *Fables*, to have been schoolmaster of Dunfermline; it is conjectured that he may have belonged to the family of Henderson of Fordell; and we know that he was incorporated in the recently founded University of Glasgow in 1462. Beyond this, nothing is known of his career; but his poems point unmistakably to his having been a man of superior learning and refinement. His *floruit* may be roughly set down as having been the third quarter of the fifteenth century.

Of his shorter poems, by far the most celebrated is *Robene and Makyne*, a pastoral which is free from the superfluous and

[1] Mr. Skeat in his learned introduction to that poem has elaborated this topic fully.

[2] *Poems and Fables*, ed. Laing, 1865.

irritating accessories of the conventional Arcadia on the one hand, and yet avoids on the other the buffoonery and horseplay which reaction against an outworn tradition has often tended to beget. With perfect simplicity and with unostentatious humour it sets forth its story—the converse of that of *Duncan Gray*—how "Meg grew hale as he grew sick." And instead of marrying and living happy ever after, the shepherd and the shepherdess part :—

> "Makyne went hame blyth anneuche
> Attour the holttis hair ;
> Robene murnit, and Makyne leuche,
> Scho sang, he sichit sair :
> And so left him, baith wo and wreuch
> In dolour and in cair,
> Keepand his hird under a heuch,
> Amangis the holtis hair."

In quite a different vein is *The Bludy Serk* in double ballad metre, two rhymes sufficing for each stanza of eight lines. But whatever merit it may possess as a ballad is to some extent destroyed when we make the disappointing discovery, in the *Moralitas* or moral, that it is meant for an allegory of the salvation of the human soul. Henryson was, indeed, prone to moralising—one of the literary vices of his time. The contrast between youth and age :—

> "O yowth, be glaid into thy flowris greene !
> O yowth thy flowris faidis ferly sone !"

—the resistless importunity of death :—

> "Come when I call, thow ma me nocht deny,
> Thocht thow war paip, empriour, and king all thre ;"

—these are obviously congenial topics, which only his masterly handling can deliver from the tediousness that comes of incessant repetition. He, too, like everybody else, lived in a degenerate age :—

"For now is exilde all ald noble corage,
Lautee, lufe, and liberalitee:
Now is stabilitee fundyn in na stage,
Nor degest counsele wyth sad maturitee,
Peax is away, all in perplexitee;
Prudence, and policy, ar banyst our al brinkis.
This warld is ver, sa may it callit be,
That want of wyse men makis fulis sitt on bynkis.

O, whare is the balance of justice and equitee?
Nothir meryt is preifit, na punyst is trespas!
All ledis now lyvis lawles at libertee,
Noucht reulit be reson, mair than ox or asse"[1]—

and so forth, and so forth. Is not the substance, though not the form, familiar to us in countless jeremiads of our own generation? The most marked deviation from the path of more or less serious moralising is the poem entitled *Sum Practysis of Medecyne*, written in an elaborate stanza, with a free use of alliteration, in which Henryson for once gives the rein to that rollicking and boisterous humour of which most of the poets his compatriots have had a share. A flash of the same spirit appears in Kynaston's story of his last illness and death, discreetly referred to by his namesake, Mr. Henderson.

Of narrative poetry in the Chaucerian manner Henryson has left us two specimens, the *Orpheus and Eurydice* (633 lines), and the *Testament of Cresseid* (616 lines), the latter of which is an avowed continuation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseid*. They are both in *The King's Quair* metre (rhyme royal), and, if comparisons must be made, the *Testament* appears to deserve the preference over the *Orpheus*. It deals with the horrible fate of Cressida after her desertion by Diomede, smitten by the sentence of the gods with leprosy and doomed to

"go begging fra hous to hous,
With cop and clapper lyke an lazarous."

There are many striking passages in the poem which demon-

[1] *The Want of Wyse Men.*

strate Henryson's versatility: such as the picture of an "interior" on a bitter winter's night, when the author describes how he—

> "tuik ane drink his spreitis to comfort,"

and—

> "armit him weill fra the cauld thairout,"

before taking up and reading glorious Chaucer's "quair" of "fair Cresseid and lustie Troylus"; or the account of the descent of the seven planets from their spheres, to pass judgment upon Cresseid, each being differentiated from the other by minute traits of appearance, more characteristic, perhaps, of men than of gods. Here is a vignette of Saturn :—

> "His face frosnit, his lyre was lyke the leid,
> His teith chatterit, and cheverit with the chin,
> His ene drowpit, how, sonkin in his heid,
> Out of his nose the meldrop fast can rin,
> With lippis bla, and cheikis leine and thin,
> The iceschoklis that fra his hair doun hang,
> Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als lang." [1]

The culminating point in the poem comes with the visit of Troilus to the lepers, when he thinks that he has seen Cresseid's face before, yet fails to recognise her, although he signals her out among the other lepers by an unusually generous alms. But the episode is too long for extraction here, and the reader must be content with two stanzas from the complaint of Cresseid (in *aab aab bab*) when sentence of leprosy has been passed upon her :—

> "Quhair is thy chalmer wantounlie besene,
> With burely bed, and bankouris browderit bene,
> Spycis and wyne to thy collatioun,
> The cowpis all of gold and silver schene,

[1] *The Testament of Cresseid*, ll. 155–16.

The sweit meitis servit in plaittis clene,
With saipheron sals of ane gude sessoun :
Thy gay garmentis with mony gudely goun,
Thy plesand lawn pinnit with goldin prene ;
All is areir, thy greit royall renoun !

Quhair is thy garding with thir greissis gay,
And fresche flowris, quhilk the Quene Floray
Had paintit plesandly in everie pane,
Quhair thou was wont full merilye in May
To walk, and tak the dew be it was day,
And heir the merle and mavis mony ane,
With ladyis fair in carrolling to gane,
And see the royal rinks in thair array,
In garmentis gay, garnischit on everie grane."

Noteworthy as the *Orpheus* and the *Cresseid* undoubtedly are—significant as we must hold them to be of the degree of technical accomplishment attained by the Scottish poets—Henryson's most successful and characteristic work is to be sought in his version of *The Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian*, one of the happiest performances in its kind which the English language has to show, and distinguished by a humanity and a tolerance which our national poetry, in so far as it bears to be a "criticism of life," has sometimes lacked. The plot of the *Taill of the Uplandis Mous and the Burges Mous*, for example, is familiar to every one, but the inimitable happiness of its adaptation to Scottish life and manners, and the dexterous mingling of the animal and the human element, give it an irresistible claim upon our attention. The mouse from the burrows town sets out for the country to pay a visit to her sister :—

"The hartlie joy, Lord God ! gif ye had sene
Was kithit quhen that thir twa sisteris met ;
And greit kyndness was schawin thame betuene,
For quhylis thay leuch, and quhylis for joy thay gret,
Quhylis kissit sweit, and quhylis in armis plet ;
And thus they fure, quhill soberit wes thair mude,
Syne fute for fute into the chalmer yude."

The upland mouse entertains her sister with peas and nuts, but the latter tells her outright—

> "My gude Friday is better nor your Pace" [Easter];

and invites her to come back to the burrows town. There they dine sumptuously "into ane spence with vittell greit plentie";

> "Baith cheis and butter upone thair skelfis hie
> And flesche and fische aneuch, baith fresche and salt,
> And sekkis full of meill and eik of malt."

The banquet is rudely interrupted by the entrance first of the spenser [butler], and next of Gilbert, or Gib-Hunter, "our jolie cat," from whose clutches the country mouse escapes only by creeping between a board and the wall. Like a wise mouse, she goes home without delay. The poet informs us that he "can nocht tell how efterwart scho fure." "Bot," he adds—

> "Bot I hard say, scho passit to hir den
> Als warme als woll, suppose it wes nocht greit,
> Full benely stuffit, baith but and ben,
> Of beinis and ruttis, peis, ry, and quheit;
> Quhen ever scho list, scho had aneuch to eit,
> In quyet and eis, withoutin ony dreid,
> Bot to hir sisteris feist na mair scho yeid."

Scarcely inferior to this excellent fable are the *Wolf and the Lamb*, *Schir Chantecleir and the Foxe*, and *The Tod's Confession to Freir Wolf*, a little masterpiece of trenchant, but not bad-tempered, satire. The fox is bidden by his confessor, by way of penance, to "forbeir flesche hyne till Pasche." He immediately proceeds to the sea-side with the virtuous intention of catching fish. At the sight of the water, however, he exclaims—

> "Better that I had bidden at hame
> Nor bene ane fischar in the Devillis name.
>
> Now mon I scraip my meit out of the sand,
> For I haif nouther boittis, nor net, nor bait."

But presently he espies a herd of goats, from among which he steals "ane lytell kid."

> "Syne ouer the heuch unto the see he hyis,
> And tuke the kid rycht be the hornis twane,
> And in the watter, outher twyis or thryis,
> He dowkit him, and till him can he sayne,
> 'Ga down, Schir Kid, cum up, Schir Salmond agane,
> Quhill he was deid, syne to the land him dreuch,
> And of that new maid Salmond eit aneuch."

But, indeed, all the *Fables* are good, and stamp Henryson as a master of fluent and easy versification, a man of insight into character, and the possessor of the same wide and generous outlook upon men and life which are not the least among the many memorable excellences of his model, Chaucer.

A very different stamp of poet was Harry the Minstrel, commonly known as "Blind Harry," who is believed to have died in 1492, or thereabouts, and whose *Wallace*[1] (*circ.* 1460) was, in one form or another, for long a prime favourite of the Scottish peasantry. It was, indeed, the *Wallace* that "poured" into the veins of Burns "a Scottish prejudice, which," the poet predicted, "will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest," which unfortunately did not prevent his writing what he conceived to be literary English prose, and which certainly helped to produce such peculiar results as *Scots Wha Ha'e*. Harry was indeed far from being an illiterate man. He had his *pro indiviso* share in the common stock of the Middle Ages; and the culture of the better sort of itinerant minstrel was probably not unlike that of the journalist of our own day, whose functions the minstrel, or "jongleur," to a certain extent anticipated in the society of a more primitive age. But there is certainly no trace in Harry of the intellectual qualities or attainments which distinguished men like Barbour in a previous generation, and men like

[1] Ed. Jamieson, Edin., 1820; ed. Moir, S. T. S., Edin., 1884–89.

Henryson in his own. His command of technique is thought by some to be superior to Barbour's (with whose *Brus* the *Wallace* challenges instant comparison), and it may be that he had been touched to some extent by the Chaucerian influence. But in every quality that goes to the making of a true poet, Harry is painfully inferior to the Archdeacon of Aberdeen, and it may be questioned whether he is much superior to the respectable Wyntoun.

The *Wallace* is divided into eleven books (containing altogether about 11,000 lines), written almost wholly in rhymed heroics, and it derives its importance from the fact that it is one of the earliest instances, if not the very earliest, of the continuous employment of that measure in Scottish literature. That the Minstrel is uncritical as an historian goes without saying. We would not have him otherwise in the age in which he lived. But he was not merely uncritical and credulous; he was grossly inaccurate and blundering. What is of even greater moment, from our point of view, is that as a poet he is undeniably tedious. Hardly a spark of inspiration lights up his bald narrative, and the only emotion which breathes in his lines is an acrid, though sincere, patriotism, as different from the fine feeling which animates Barbour as vinegar is from wine. In Blind Harry we get the harsh note of provinciality, which a century of incessant guerilla warfare with England was only too likely to bring out. The Scots, or some of their mouthpieces, have put on the airs and graces of an "oppressed nationality," and no longer start from the assumption of their equality in the scale of national existence with their "auld enemies." The English have ceased to be worthy opponents, and have become mere monsters. The age of chivalry is past, and its lofty ideals of bearing and conduct have gone with it.[1]

[1] It is right to note that the view which maintains Barbour's superiority to Harry as a poet has been ably controverted by Mr. Craigie, *Scottish Review*, July, 1893.

Here are some of the hero's minor exploits :—

"A churl thai had that felloune byrdyngis bar ;
Excedandlye he wald lyft mekill mar
Than ony twa that their amang thaim fand ;
And als be wss a sport he tuk in hand :
He bar a sasteing in a boustous poille :
On his braid back of ony wald he thoille,
Bot for a grot, als fast as he mycht draw.
Quhen Wallas herd spek of that mery saw,
He likyt weill at that mercat to be,
And for a strak he bad him grottis thre.
The churl grantyt, of that proferr was fayn
To pay the silver Wallas was full bayne.
Wallas that steing tuk wp in till his hand ;
Full sturdely he coud befor him stand,
Wallas, with that, apon the bak him gaif,
Till his ryg bane he all in sondyr draif.
The carll was dede : of him I spek no mar.
The Ingliss men semblit on Wallas thair,
Feill on the feld of frekis fechtand fast ;
He unabasyt, and nocht gretlie agast,
Upon the hed ane with the steing hitt he,
Till bayn and brayn he gert in pecis fle.
Ane other he straik on a basnat of steille,
The tre to raiff and fruschit eviredeille.
His steyng was tint, the Ingliss man was dede :
For his crag bayne was brokyn in that stede.
He drew a suerde at helpit him at neide,
Throuch oute the thikest of the press he yeid ;
And at his horss full fayne he wald haif beyne.
Twa sarde him maist that cruell war and keyne.
Wallas raturned as man of mekyll mayne ;
And at a straik the formast has he slayne.
The tother fled, and durst him nocht abide ;
Bot a rycht straik Wallas him gat that tid :
In at the guschet brymly he him bar :
The grounden suerd throuchout his cost it schar.
Fyve slew he thar, or that he left the toune :
He gat his horss, to Laglyne maid him boune,
Kepyt his child and leyt him nocht abide :
In saufté thus on to the wod can ride." [1]

[1] *Wallace*, bk. ii., ll. 29–68.

This may be thoroughly satisfactory and businesslike, but it is not exhilarating.

One of the features of the period in which Henryson and Blind Harry flourished was a tendency to cast back to alliteration. It is doubtful, indeed, whether *Golagros and Gawane*[1] is a production of that era and of Clerk of Tranent, or whether it must not be referred to the previous century and the Huchown cycle. But both *The Buke of the Howlat* and *The Taill of Rauf Coilzear* almost certainly belong to the second half of the fifteenth century. They are in alliterative rhymed stanzas of thirteen lines—*ab ab ab ab c d d d c.*

The thread on which hangs the *Buke of the Howlat* (believed to be from the pen of Sir Richard Holland and obviously of the class of which perhaps the most familiar representative in English is the *Parlement of Foules*) is the hard lot of the Owl, which is morbidly conscious of its unprepossessing appearance and disagreeable voice. It proceeds to lay its grievances in form before the Pope of the bird-world, to wit, the Peacock, in the following manner :—

> " Before the Pape, when the pur present him had,
> With sic courtassy as he couth, on kneis he fell ;
> Said : 'Ave Raby, be the rud I am richt rad
> For to behald your halyness, or my tale tell ;
> I may noch suffyss to see your sanctitud sad.'
> The Pape wyslie, I wiss, of worschipe the well,
> Gave him his braid benesoun, and baldly him bad
> That he suld spedely speik and spair nocht to spell.
> 'I come to speir,' quoth the spreit, 'in to speciall,
> Quhy I am formed so fowle,
> Ay to howt and to howle,
> As ane horrible Owl,
> Ugsum our all.

---

[1] *Golagros* and the poems after mentioned will be found in *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, ed. Amours, S. T. S., Edin., 1897.

'I am netherit ane Owll thus be Natur,
Lykar a fule than a fowle in figur and face ;
Bysyn of all birdis that ever body bure,
Withoutin causs or cryme kind in this case.
I have appelit to your presence, precious and pur,
Askis helpe in till haist at your halyness,
That ye wald cry apon Crist that has all in cur,
To schape me a schand bird in a schort space ;
And till accuss Natur, this is no nay :
Thus, throw your halyness, may ye
Make a fair foule of me,
Or elles dredles I de
Or myne end daye."[1]

A general gathering and feast of the birds is held, and among others to arrive is the Rook, who turns out to be a Gaelic bard. We have already referred to the two following stanzas as a significant indication of the feelings of a Scots poet who wrote in "Inglise" towards his Celtic fellow-craftsman :—

"Sa come the Ruke with a rerd and a rane roch,
A bard owt of Irland with Banachadee !
Said : 'Gluntow guk dynyd dach hala mischy doch ;
Raike hir a rug of the rost, or scho sall ryive the.
Mich macmory ach mach momctir moch loch ;
Set hir doune, gif hir drink ; quhat Dele als the ?'
O Deremyne, O Donnall, O Dochardy droch ;
Thir ar his Irland kingis of the Irischerye :
O Knewlyn, O Conochor, O Gregre Makgrane ;
The Shenachy, the Clarschach,
The Ben schene, the Ballach,
The Crekery, the Corach,
Scho kennis thaim ilk ane.

Mony lesingis he maid ; wald let for no man
To speik quhill he spokin had, sparit no thingis.
The dene rurale, the Ravyn, reprovit him than,
Bad him his lesingis leif befor thai lordingis.

[1] From *The Buke of the Howlat*, stt. viii. and ix.

The barde worth brane wod, and bitterly couth ban ;
'How Corby messinger,' quoth he, 'with sorowe now syngis ;
Thow ischit out of Noyes ark, and to the erd wan,
Taryit as a tratour, and brocht na tythingis.
I shall ryive thee, Ravyne, baith guttis and gall.'
The dene rurale worthit reid
Stawe for schame of the steid ;
The barde held a grete pleid
In the hie hall."[1]

There is also a good deal of rather less interesting material in a poem the real object of which is the glorification of the House of Douglas :—

"Off the douchty Dowglass to dyte me I dress ;
Thar armes of ancestry honourable ay,
Quhilk oft blythit the Bruse in his distress ;
Tharfor he blissit that blud bald in assay.
Reid the writ of thar werk, to your witness ;
Furth on my matir to muse I mufe as I may.
The said persevantis gyde was grathit, I gess,
Brusit with ane grene tre, gudly and gay,
That bure branchis on breid blythest of hewe ;
On ilk beugh till embrace,
Writtin in a bill was,
O Dowglass, O Dowglass,
Tender and trewe !"[2]

So sings the hardy poet, and the reader of Scottish history is aware that never were compliments more thoroughly ill-deserved. But it matters not to us to what faction in Scottish politics the author of the *Howlat* chose to attach himself. Whether he was a loyal subject or a traitor, a plotter or an honest man, he had a considerable gift of poetry, a more than respectable sense of humour, and a surprising command of an extremely complicated and artificial mode of expression.

[1] From *The Buke of the Howlat*, stt. lxii. and lxiii.
[2] *Ibid.*, st. xxxi.

We may almost say the same of the writer of *Rauf Coilzear*, though his humour is of a broader and less sophisticated type—savouring almost in passages of the "knockabout" comedian—and he gives, upon the whole, the impression of having been a man of inferior accomplishment to his rival of the *Howlat*. The story he has to tell—and he tells it in great detail as well as with great spirit—is of the familiar "Haroun Alraschid" variety, and is perhaps the origin of the French proverb, "Charbonnier est maître chez soi."[1] The Emperor Charlemagne (if we may be permitted so to call him), otherwise King Charles, is driven by stress of weather to take refuge in a collier's hut, where he is taught manners in a rude but effective fashion, and where, needless to say, he is regaled with the best of everything, including game from his own forests. He, of course, pretends to be merely a Court official, and in that capacity invites the collier to come and see him at the palace. The collier does so, discovers who his guest truly was, and is made a knight. The tale is put into a Scottish setting, as Mr. Henderson points out, and the best scenes are undoubtedly those which pass under the collier's roof. These are far better than merely mechanical reproductions of conventional situations, and the same praise may be awarded to the character of the collier himself, which I venture to think possesses the true Scottish flavour. Here are a couple of stanzas illustrating his resolute determination to be supreme in his own house :—

"Sone was the Supper dicht, and the fyre bet,
And thay had weschin, I wis, the worthiest was thair;
'Tak my wyfe be the hand, in feir, withoutin let,
And gang begin the buird,' said the Coilzear.
'That war unsemand, forsuith, and thy self unset;'

[1] It will be observed that *Rauf* in point of plot bears a strong family resemblance to the English ballad of *John the Reve*, with which it is coupled by Dunbar and Douglas.

The King profferit him to gang, and maid ane strange fair.
'Now is twyse,' said the Carll, 'me think thow hes forget.'
He leit gyrd to the King, withoutin ony mair,
And hit him under the eir with his richt hand,
Quhill he stakkerit thair with all
Half the breid of the hall;
He faind never of ane fall,
Quhill he the eird fand.

He start up stoutly agane, uneis micht he stand;
For anger of that outray he had thair tane.
He callit on Gyliane his wyfe: 'Ga, tak him be the hand,
And gang agane to the buird, quhair ye suld air have gane.'
'Schir, thou art unskilfull, and that shall I warrand,
Thow byrd to have nurtour aneuch, and thow hes nane;
Thow hes walkit, I wis, in mony wyld land,
The mair vertew thow suld have, to keip the fra blame;
Thow suld be courtes of kynd, and ane cunnand Courteir.
Thocht that I simpill be,
Do as I bid the,
The hous is myne, pardie,
And all that is heir.'"[1]

Both *Rauf Coilzear* and the *Howlat* announce that the old metrical romance is dead. It had received fair warning of its doom from *Sir Thopas*, and by the close of the fifteenth century the sentence had been carried into execution. Its methods and mannerisms had been burlesqued and degraded into a medium of expression for ideas which, in the convenient phrase of a later century, were "low." How "low" they sometimes were we may gather from certain poems[2] whose authorship is unknown, and whose precise date is uncertain, but which may without any gross impropriety be referred to the period we are now dealing with, and which, in any event, enjoyed abundant fame and popularity in their day.

The longest of these is *Colkelbie's Sow*,[3] which, including the

[1] From *Rauf Coilzear*, stt. xii. and xiii.
[2] All to be found in Laing's *Select Remains*, ed. Smart, Edin., 1885.
[3] Laing, *ut sup.* p. 238.

"prohemium," extends to about nine hundred lines, of which half are rhymed sixes, and the remainder heroics. It professes to trace the history of the "penneis thre" for which the merry man, Colkelbie, sold his "simple blak sow," and not the least interesting portion of the work, from the point of view of social economy, is the warm encouragement which the third part gives to all engaged in poultry farming. From a literary point of view, undoubtedly the most noteworthy passage is that in which are enumerated the names of the dances played by the minstrels at the feast. Taken as a whole, the piece is more extravagant than amusing; nor, it must honestly be owned, is much diversion to be reaped from *King Berdok*[1] or *The Gyre-Carling*,[2] surely the most astounding lyric with which the tender age of Royalty was ever "comforted," if Sir David Lyndsay can be taken to imply that he recited this identical tale to the youthful James V. *The Gyre-Carling*, in truth, is only worth notice because it happens to be old. More may be said for *Sir John Rowil's Cursing*,[3] which is an elaborate mock-excommunication or commination in octosyllabics of the stealers, holders, concealers, and resetters or

> "Fyve fat geiss of Schir Johne Rowlis,
> With caponis, henis, and uthir fowlis."

"To the feynd thair saulis, thair craig the gallowis" is a concise summary of the fate to which Sir John would consign the miscreants in question; but, in addition, he invokes upon their persons in this world almost every conceivable disease known to the faculty, and predicts the most elaborate and exquisite tortures for them in the next. The poem, which depends for its success upon exaggeration and over-emphasis, is a little too long, and winds up with the pious, but not too obviously

[1] Laing, *ut sup.* p. 267. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 208. We know not whether this Rowll was Dunbar's "Rowll of Abirdene," or "gentle Rowll of Corstorphyn," or either of them.

sincere, prayer, that the criminals may be brought in due time to repentance, and learn to

> "forbeir
> Resset or stowth of uther menis geir;
> And als again the geir restoir
> Till Rowle as I hafe said befoir."

Greatly superior in point and vigour is *Symmie and his Bruder*,[1] a satire in the *Peblis to the Play* vein, upon the begging friars, the author of which we may perhaps conjecture to have been a Fife man, or at least one well acquainted with the neighbourhood of St. Andrews. We feel, too, that we have reached much better work—work with some appreciable and intelligent relation to human life—when we come to the *Wowing of Jok and Jynny*[2] and *The Wife of Auchtermuchty*.[3] But here we are within hail of the great ballad and folk-song controversy, the due consideration of which must be reserved for a later chapter. Meanwhile we pass on to the high noon of the Middle Scots period, noting as a link between it and an earlier age the rhymed alliterative lyric, *Tayis Bank*, written to celebrate the perfections of Margaret, daughter of John, Lord Drummond, and mistress of James IV. The reader may not object to see this chapter brought to a conclusion with a short specimen of this ingenious and somewhat laboured exercise :—

> "The blosummes that wer blycht and brycht,
> By hir wer blacht and blew;
> Sche gladit all the foull of flicht
> That in the forrest flew;
> Scho mycht haif confort king or knycht
> That ever in cuntre I knew,
> As waill, and well of warldly wicht
> In womanly vertew.

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[1] Laing, *ut sup.* p. 311. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 355.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Hir cullour cleir, hir countinance,
  Hir cumly cristall ene,
Hir portratour of most plesance
  All pictour did prevene.
Off every vertew to avance,
  Quhen ladeis prasit bene,
Rychttest in my remembrance
  That rose is rutit grene." [1]

[1] Laing, *ut sup.* p. 222, ll. 65–80.

CHAPTER II

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCOTTISH POETRY

THERE is no more brilliant period in the history of Scotland than the quarter of a century during which James IV. occupied the throne (1488–1513), and its splendour is but emphasised by the overwhelming nature of the catastrophe with which it terminated. In every department of national life substantial progress was made. Strenuous efforts were put forth to maintain law and order, and even in the highlands the power of the central authority made itself felt. The trade and commerce of the country expanded to an unprecedented extent,[1] and the statute by which sub-infeudation was authorised, and so encouraged, marks an important stage in the transition from a purely military to a civil state of society.[2] Arts and manufactures were diligently fostered, and the printing press was set up in Scotland for the first time by Chepman and Myllar in 1507 under the express authority of the Crown. Education became an object of solicitude to the governing

[1] Ayala, the Spanish ambassador, reports in 1498 that Scotland is worth three times more now than formerly, on account of foreigners having come to the country and taught the people how to live. See *The Days of James IV.*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 1890, which furnishes a most useful bird's-eye view of the King's reign.

[2] Act, 1503, c. 37 (91).

classes; the King's College was founded in Aberdeen in 1495; and a significant enactment of the legislature provided for the eldest sons of all barons and freeholders of substance being sent to the grammar schools and thereafter to the schools of Art and Law in order that they might be qualified for the task of administering justice in after life.[1] Some years later an attempt was made to counteract the influence of the barons as exercised in their own courts by the establishment of a permanent tribunal sitting continually in Edinburgh or elsewhere,[2] but the successful accomplishment of this salutary design was deferred until 1532.[3]

While her domestic affairs were in this satisfactory train, Scotland had acquired an importance in the eyes of Europe to which she had hitherto been unaccustomed. Her ships, under captains like Sir Andrew Wood, held their own upon the seas even against the ships of England, and the foundations were laid of a maritime power which, but for the disaster of Flodden, might have attained formidable proportions. National defence on land was no less assiduously cared for. Pursuing its traditional policy, the Parliament endeavoured to secure that all men capable of bearing arms should, according to their rank and station, have arms to bear, and to that end enjoined "wapinschaws" to be held in each sheriffdom four times a year.[4] Scotland, in short, took her place among the nations of Europe, played her part in their high politics, and, in the words of Mr. Mackay, "became from a second- almost a first-class power."[5] And in all this process of development there can be no doubt that the moving spirit was the King, though he was fortunate in at least one of his counsellors, the wise, public-spirited, and pious William Elphinstone, Bishop

[1] Act, 1496, c. 3 (1494, c. 54).
[2] Act, 1503, c. 2 (58).
[3] Act, 1532, c. 2 (1537, cc. 6 *et seq.*)
[4] Act 1491, c. 13 (31 and 32). The same Act prohibited football, golf, or "other sic unprofitable sports," which were obviously serious competitors with archery.
[5] *Dic. Nat. Biog.*, art. James IV.

of Aberdeen. Indomitable energy and unquenchable interest in everything around him were the keynotes of the sovereign's character, and in these respects he suggests a resemblance to one of his remote descendants. His intelligence was ever alert, and his mind receptive of new ideas. That he dabbled in alchemy and lent too ready an ear to quacks like John Damian, the Dousterswivel upon whom he conferred the Abbey of Tungland, and who was one of the objects of Dunbar's satire,[1] means no more than that, in the language of our own day, he was keenly interested in the latest discoveries of science, and disposed to heap rewards upon inventors. To quote Mr. Mackay's admirable summary once more, "He was a wise legislator, an energetic administrator, and no unskilful diplomatist, a patron of learning, the Church, and the poor."[2] Had his impetuosity been tempered by calculation, all might have been well. But the situation in which he found himself placed was no easy one. To hold the balance equally between France and England, and to play off the one country against the other, were tasks which might have tried the coolest nerve, the most unwearying patience, and the steadiest hand. As it was, he precipitated his country and his people into an abyss from which they were not able to emerge, and then only after much suffering and humiliation, for more than two hundred years.

Such was the monarch to whose Court was attached, during almost the whole of his career, the poet who by common consent is justly regarded as the greatest of Burns's predecessors. William Dunbar[3] (1460?—1520?) was a native of East

[1] *Ane ballat of the fenyeit freir of Tungland.*

[2] *Dic. Nat. Biog.*, art. James IV. We may compare Lyndsay's fine panegyric on James in the *Papyngo*, ll. 486–506.

[3] *Poems*, ed. Schipper, Vienna, 1891; ed. Small, Gregor, and Mackay, S. T. S., 3 vols., Edin., 1893: this latter a truly admirable edition and the one always cited here. See also Laing's edition, 2 vols. Edin., 1834. Reference may also be made to Schipper's *William Dunbar, sein Leben und seine gedichte*, Berlin, 1884.

Lothian, and is conjectured to have been descended from the once powerful Earls of Dunbar, more than one of whom were celebrated for their defection from the national cause.[1] It is not known where he was educated, but he is believed to be the William Dunbar who graduated Bachelor of Arts at St. Andrews in 1477, and Master in 1479. He certainly became a novice of the order of St. Francis, and in the capacity of a begging friar travelled over the whole of England "from Berwick to Kalice."

> "In freiris weid full fairly haif I fleichit,
> In it haif I in pulpit gon and preichit
> In Derntoun kirk, and eik in Canterberry;
> In it I past at Dover our the ferry
> Throw Picardy, and thair the people teichit."[2]

But the experiment was apparently not a success. The vision of St. Francis which appeared to him exhorting him to become a monk, turned out to be that of a fiend in the likeness of a friar, and vanished away "with stynk and fyrie smowk." Henceforth Dunbar abandoned all thought of the cowl, and he joined the ranks of the secular clergy with tolerable prospects of preferment.

It is conjectured that he acted as Secretary to an Embassy from the Scottish Court to that of France in 1491, and in 1500, as appears from the Lord High Treasurer's accounts, the King bestowed upon him a pension of £10, which was raised to £20 in 1507, and to £80 in 1510. In short, he seems to have been emphatically *bien vu* in the highest quarters. But he never obtained the bishopric which his nurse had predicted for him as he lay on her knee,[3] and which he suggested to St Francis as a preferable alternative to the

[1] Walter Kennedy facetiously avers that the first Dunbar was "generit betuix ane sche beir and a deill." He adds that the name was originally Dewlbeir, not Dunbar, a sufficiently far-fetched and feeble pun. See *The Flyting*, ll. p. 257 *et seq.*

[2] Ed. S. T. S. *ut sup.*, ii. p. 132, ll. 35–40.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 106, l. 62.

friar's habit.[1] He did not even obtain a benefice, and he had the mortification of seeing himself outstripped in the race by persons of birth and breeding inferior to his own—"upolandis Michell," who has "twa curis or thre," or "Jok that wes wont to keip the stirkis," and can now "draw him ane cleik of kirkis."[2]

It was not for want of pressing his claims upon the King and Queen that Dunbar was baulked of his reward; for I confess myself unable to concur in the ingenious view, propounded by Mr. Gregory Smith,[3] that Dunbar wrote all his petitions and complaints "with his tongue in his cheek." It is true that he sometimes pleads his cause with a well contrived semblance of jocularity. But even in the *Petition of the Gray Horse, Auld Dunbar*, and *God gif ye war Johne Thomsounis man*—much more in poems such as *Dunbar's Complaint, Dunbar's Remonstrance to the King*, and *Of the Warldis Instabilitie*—I cannot help thinking that we catch the tones of anxious sincerity, and that Dunbar really "means business"—though doubtless the form in which he gives vent to his aspirations is conventional enough. Despite, then, an importunity by no means maladroit, he was doomed to remain on at Court; and the demoralising effect which the attitude of expecting "something to turn up" almost invariably produces in such circumstances is, I venture to think, palpable enough in his writings.

Dunbar was a member of the Embassy sent by James to England in 1501 to negotiate his marriage with Margaret Tudor. On this occasion, he composed a poem in the literary dialect of England in honour of London, which is as handsome a compliment as was ever paid by rhymer to a great city, and for which he received a gratuity of £6 13s. 4d. from Henry VII. Here are two stanzas:—

[1] Ed. S. T. S., ii. p. 132, l. 24.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 106, ll. 66 *et seq.*
[3] *The Transition Period* (in *Periods of European Literature*), p. 55.

"Gemme of all joy, jasper of jocunditie,
Most mighty carbuncle of vertue and valour;
Strong Troy in vigour and in strenuytie
Of royall cities rose and geraflour;
Empresse of townes, exalt in honour;
In beawtie beryng the crone imperiall;
Swete paradise precelling in pleasure:
London, thow art the floure of Cities all.

. . . . . .

Strong be thy wallis that about the standis;
Wise be the people that within the dwellis;
Fresh is thy river with his lusty strandis;
Blith be thy churches, wele sownyng be thy bellis;
Rich be thy merchauntis in substaunce that excellis;
Fair be their wives, right lovesom, white and small;
Clere be thy virgyns, lusty under kellis;
London, thow art the flour of Cities all." [1]

On the Princess Margaret's arrival in Scotland and her marriage to the King in 1503, it was Dunbar's duty to welcome her in an appropriate manner; and this he did in the short poem beginning:—

"Now fayre, fayrest off every fayre,
Princes most plesant and preclare,
The lustyest one alyue that bene,
Welcum of Scotland to be Queene!" [2]

as well as in *The Thistle and the Rose*, one of his most celebrated pieces, in which, through the mask of "Dame Natur," he solemnly warns the royal bridegroom to be "discreit"—

"Nor hald non udir flour in sic denty
As the fresche Ross, of cullour reid and quhyt;
For gif thow dois, hurt is thyne honesty,
Conciddering that no flour is so perfyt,
So full of vertew, plesans, and delyt,
So full of blisful angeilik bewty,
Imperiall birth, honour, and dignite." [3]

[1] Ed. S. T. S., ii. p. 276, ll. 17–24, 41–48.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 279.
[3] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 187, ll. 141 *et seq.*

In 1511 he accompanied the Queen on her pilgrimage to the North of Scotland, and celebrated her visit to Aberdeen by a poem, which, after describing the masque or pageant that greeted the Queen's entrance into the town, winds up as follows :—

"O potent princes, pleasant and preclair,
Great caus thow hes to thank this nobill toun,
That for to do the honnour, did not spair
Thair geir, riches, substance, and persoun,
The to ressave on maist fair fasoun ;
The for to pleis thay socht all way and mein ;
Thairfoir, sa lang as quein thow beiris croun,
Be thankfull to this burgh of Aberdein." [1]

It is impossible to avoid the observation how Dunbar's complimentary language with respect to London and Aberdeen contrasts with his aspersions upon the Scottish capital, which he appears to have found no less destitute of any but natural amenity than most other critics :—

"May nane pas throw your principall gaittis,
For stink of haddockis and of scaittis ;
For cryis of carlingis and debaittis ;
For fensum flyttingis of defame ;
Think ye nocht schame,
Befoir strangeris of all estaittis
That sic dishonour hurt your name !

Your stynkand styll that standis dirk,
Haldis the lycht fra your parroche kirk ;
Your foirstairis makis your housis mirk,
Lyk na cuntray bot heir at hame :
Think ye nocht schame,
Sa litill polesie to wirk
In hurt and sklander of your name !" [2]

Before the visit to Aberdeen, Dunbar had appeared in print. Seven poems from his pen formed part of a volume printed by Chepman and Myllar in 1508, a single mutilated copy of

[1] Ed. S. T. S., ii. p. 251, ll. 65 *et seq.*
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 261, ll. 8 *et seq.*

which, discovered in Ayrshire towards the close of the eighteenth century, is preserved in the Advocates' Library.[1] Down to the year of Flodden, we keep touch of Dunbar through the Treasurer's accounts. These have perished for the following years, 1513–15, and thenceforward the poet's name does not appear in them. But it seems probable that he survived till about 1520, and it is to the last period of his life that the bulk of his religious poetry is generally ascribed. In this department, his best work may perhaps be found in *The Merle and the Nightingale*,[2] with its text, "All luve is lost bot upone God allone," and in the Easter Hymn, from which I excerpt the opening verse :—

> "Done is a battell on the dragon blak,
> Our campioun Chryst confoundit hes his force ;
> The gettis of hell ar brokin with a crak,
> The signe triumphall rasit is of the croce,
> The divillis trymmillis with hiddouss voce,
> The saulis ar borrowit, and to the bliss can go,
> Chryst with his blud our ransonis dois indoce ;
> Surrexit dominus de sepulchro." [3]

It is permissible to form from his works a conjecture as to Dunbar's character and temperament. We may question whether he had the genuine religious instinct, without throwing doubt upon the sincerity of the feeling to which his hymns give expression, and without relying exclusively upon *Kynd Kittok* and the *Dregy*, in which the license usually extended to a Churchman in such matters is pushed to the point of blasphemy. But it is clear that he was inclined to take gloomy views, and perhaps his own scant measure of success in life aggravated a constitutional tendency. Like most of his

[1] The seven pieces in question are, *The Goldyn Targe*, *The Flyting*, *The Tua Mariit Wemen*, *Lament for the Makaris*, *Kynd Kittok*, *The Testament of Mr. Andro Kennedy*, and *The Ballad of Lord Bernard Stewart*. The text of the remainder of Dunbar's works is derived almost entirely from the Maitland and the Bannatyne MS.

[2] *Works*, ii. p. 174.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 156.

contemporaries, he was deeply impressed by the facts that man is mortal, and that "all erdly joy returnis in pane."[1] We can well believe that he speaks truth when he declares on his sick-bed, "*timor mortis conturbat me*."[2] He endeavours upon occasion to cheer up, and philosophises to the refrain, "For to be blyth me think it best."[3] But a man in really good spirits does not find it necessary thus to enunciate a laboured optimism. In his less depressed moments, he delights, like most of his contemporaries, in being gnomic and sententious. He is clear that there should be discretion in asking, in giving, and in taking[4]; he points out that "he rewlis weill that weill himself can gyd;"[5] and he discourses on the text, "he hes aneuch that is content."[6] Probably he enforced these and similar maxims more powerfully by his verse than by his conduct. At times, it is true, his mirth becomes riotous, but a tincture of the sardonic is never wholly absent, and he is not conspicuous for the qualities which are summed up in the expression *bon enfant*. In one of his milder moods he has given us a fine poem *In prays of Women*.[7] Whoever disparages women, he declares, "exylit he suld be of all gud company." But the best commentary upon this chivalrous sentiment is furnished by *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*,[8] *Thir ladyis fair that makis repair*,[9] *This lang Lentern makis me lene*,[10] and the *Ballate against evil women*.[11] He is disposed to think that the times are out of joint, and he has formulated a sweeping indictment against the society of his own age.[12] But this loses something of its sting when we remember that similar charges have been brought against every generation in the world's history.

[1] *Works*, ii. p. 76. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 48. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 110.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. pp. 84 *et seq.* [5] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 98. [6] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 230.
[7] *Ibid.*, ii. 170. [8] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 30. [9] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 168.
[10] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 160. [11] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 266.
[12] See the poem, *Devorit with Dreme*, vol ii. p. 81. Agreeably to precedent, he makes a furious onslaught on the prevailing fashions in women's dress in ll. 71 *et seq.*

Though the bulk of Dunbar's work as it has reached us is not large, there is great variety in his subjects and in his modes of treatment. His range extends from devotion to buffoonery, from courtly panegyric to scurrilous invective. And whatever he touches is handled with the success which comes of the poet's complete control of his medium of expression. There is nothing in Dunbar of the tyro or the fumbler. He never appears to be tentatively groping for new effects. He approaches his work with perfect confidence in his own accomplishment, and that confidence is never betrayed by the result. In a word, he was a conscious and consummate artist, whose "finish" is comparable, without exaggeration, to that of Virgil, or Pope, or Tennyson. One only of his critics will allow him no merit. But it is unnecessary to take Mr. Lowell quite seriously upon this topic.[1] Dunbar would possibly have failed as signally to appreciate Hosea Biglow as Lowell to appreciate Dunbar. Perhaps, too, we may surmise that some one had been urging him with more zeal than discretion to read and enjoy Dunbar. Such recommendations are apt, if persistently repeated, to fail of their purpose. Inasmuch, however, as Mr. Lowell would seem to have read comparatively little of his author,[2] his judgment need not disconcert us. Nor need any one be alarmed by the idea that Dunbar is crabbed or difficult reading. At first, no doubt, the beginner's progress will be slow, and a glossary will always prove a useful, if not an indispensable, companion. But a very moderate amount of perseverance will sufficiently familiarise the student with the poet's vocabulary and syntax to enable

[1] The view of Mr. Courthope (*History of English Poetry*, vol. i. pp. 370–74), deserves more serious consideration, but I cannot forego the opportunity of subscribing, with all deference, to Mr. Henderson's dissent from a judgment which practically ignores the most characteristic portion of Dunbar's work and the most salient aspect of his genius.

[2] *Teste* Mr. O. Smeaton in his *William Dunbar* (Famous Scots Series), Edin., 1891, p. 125.

him to enjoy as well as to read; and a quarter of an hour's application should get him well "into the swing of it."

At intervals in the literary history of every nation there is a tendency for the prevailing poetical convention to become rigid, and for the current poetical dialect to become stereotyped. Such a tendency is strongly apparent in the Scottish literature of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. When a poet was taking himself seriously, when he was tuning his lyre to really important themes, only one style was possible for him—the "aureate" style. To Dunbar, Homer's style seemed "aureate," and both Homer and Cicero are spoken of by him as having had "aureate tongues." It is difficult to exhaust the full meaning which the epithet "aureate" possessed for Dunbar and his contemporaries. Perhaps among other things it connoted the idea of achieving by means of language an effect analogous to that produced in paint by bright and vivid colouring. Certainly nothing commonplace was, in their opinion, good enough for high poetry. Only in the tints of the ruby, the sapphire, or the beryl, only in the red gleam of gold or the brilliant and variegated hues of enamel, could metaphors be found by which the beauties of Nature or the excellences of an individual might be adequately depicted. But the most obvious manifestation of the striving after the "aureate" was a species of euphuism, of which a couple of lines from Sir David Lyndsay will serve to convey a clearer idea than pages of exposition—

> "O potent prince of pulchritude preclair,
> God Cupido preserve your celsitude!"

The trick is essentially of the same kind with the device of "poetical diction" as practised by the poets of the eighteenth century, though it is only on rare occasions that we come across expressions, like "the goldyn candill matutyne"[1] as an

[1] *The Goldyn Targe*, Dunbar, vol. ii. p. 1, l. 4.

equivalent for the sun, which directly remind us of the "fleecy cares" and "gelid pools" of that later age.[1] Most persons will probably agree that the thing may be overdone. But the search for the recondite and the predilection for the far-fetched are not necessarily signs of poetical degeneration or decadence. They may merely mean that the artist has attained to full self-consciousness, and has grasped the principle that the ordinary speech of every-day life, unordered and unsifted, will not do for literature. Certainly, of Dunbar's "full-dress" poems we may say that they are very pleasing specimens of their sort. They comprise the London and Aberdeen poems already referred to, *The Thistle and the Rose* (a somewhat confused allegory, commemorated in a well-known couplet of Langhorne's), a *Ballad on Lord Bernard Stewart*, and *The Goldyn Targe*, which, although allegorical, has the rare merit of not being tedious. The two penultimate stanzas expound so clearly Dunbar's literary ideals, and so frankly indicate his models, that they are worth quoting :—

"O reuerend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all,
As in oure tong ane flour imperiall,
That raise in Britane ewir, quho redis rycht,
Thou beiris of makaris the tryumph riall;
Thy fresch anamalit termes celicall
This mater coud illumynit haue full brycht:
Was thou noucht of oure Inglisch all the lycht,
Surmounting ewiry tong terrestriall,
Alls fer as Mayes morow dois mydnycht?

O morall Gower, and Ludgate laureate,
Your sugurit lips and tongis aureate,
Bene to oure eris cause of grete delyte;
Your angel mouthis most mellifluate
Our rude langage has clere illumynate,

[1] Another curious coincidence between the two periods is found in their common abuse of the personification of abstract qualities.

> And faire our-gilt oure speech, that imperfyte
> Stude, or your goldyn pennis schupe to wryte ;
> This Ile before was bare, and desolate
> Off rethorike, or lusty fresch endyte." [1]

Few probably will have any hesitation in admitting that the pupil surpassed two of his masters. The third indeed he could never hope to rival, unless in mere technical dexterity. But the point of interest is that it is precisely for their technical or rather, perhaps, verbal dexterity—for the success with which they have "enamelled" and "illuminated" and "overgilt" our English tongue—that Dunbar singles them out for what I venture to think is meant for sincere and unqualified praise. In many of his other poems he owes little or nothing to this trio.[2] But their example was so intelligently followed by him in this class of work that his set-pieces cannot with justice be accused of being no better than the professional exercises of a hired poet.

It is a far cry from the "aureate" style to the *vers de societé* or *jeux d'esprit* which Dunbar, we may conceive, composed for the delectation of the private circle of the Court, both before and after the King's marriage. In view of the verses *To the Quene*,[3] it may seem vain to draw distinctions in point of delicacy. But pieces like *The Wowing of the King quhen he wes in Dunfermeling*,[4] and *Ane brash of Wowing*,[5] a gross though highly characteristic performance, may be attributed with more propriety as well as plausibility to the King's bachelor days. Of the rest (which include the poems on *James Dog*,[6] the keeper of the Queen's wardrobe, and the spirited *Dance in the Quenis Chalmer*[7]), the lines *Of ane Blak-Moir*,[8] "My ladye with the

[1] *The Goldyn Targe*, Dunbar, ii. p. 10.

[2] Dunbar's heavy obligation to Chaucer is fully considered in *Chambers's Cyclopædia of Literature* (ed. 1901, vol. i. p. 194), in an able article with almost all the critical views expressed in which I have the misfortune to differ.

[3] *Works*, ii. p. 203.

[4] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 136.

[5] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 247.

[6] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 195 *et seq.*

[7] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 199.

[8] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 201.

mekle lippis," are perhaps the most amusing. *The Turnament*[1] between the soutar and the tailor is more boisterous than entertaining, and its humour is essentially primitive. But unquestionably the happiest of Dunbar's essays (if Dunbar's it be) in broad extravaganza is the *Littill Interlud of the Droichis* [Dwarf's] *part of the play*,[2] a speech which some suppose that he himself may have recited in character, and which has a peculiar interest as practically the only fragment that has come down to us (with the exception of Sir David Lyndsay's *Three Estaittis*) of the Scottish pre-Reformation drama. Here are two verses in which the dwarf traces his illustrious pedigree :—

"My foir grandschir, hecht Fyn Mackcowll,
That dang the Devill and gart him yowll,
The skyis raind quhen he wald scowle,
He trublit all the air :
He gat my gudschir Gog Magog,
He, quhan he dansit, the warld wad schog ;
Ten thowsand ellis yeid in his frog
Off Heland plaidis and mair.

And yit he wes of tendir yowth ;
Bot eftir he grew mekle at fowth,
Ellevin myle wyd mett was his mowth,
His teith wes ten myle squair.
He wald upoun his tais up stand,
And tak the starni's doun with his hand,
And sett thame in a gold garland.
Aboif his wyvis hair."[3]

In pure narrative Dunbar has left us nothing except the *Freiris of Berwik*[4] (which may well be his) a poem of nearly 600 lines in rhymed heroics, on one of those stock-themes derogatory to the character of the clergy in which the age took so much pleasure. *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*,[5] his next longest piece, written in alliterative unrhymed verse, is rather dramatic than narrative, and rather satirical than dramatic. It deals with the everlasting subject of conjugal infidelity, and the

[1] *Works*, ii. p. 122. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 314. [3] ll. 33–48.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 285. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 30.

first woman sets forth the arguments for the dissolubility of marriage from her point of view with a force and an outspokenness which the newest of "new women" might envy. Some critics are disposed to consider *The Tua Mariit Wemen* among the very best of Dunbar's work; and I should be the last person to disparage its power, or the easy command it displays of a difficult and complicated scheme of versification. But I own to thinking it monotonous, and the satire seems to me too violent and indiscriminate to convince or to convert. It would be impossible to quote faithfully from the more trenchant portions of the poem, but, in order to exhibit the nature of the metre, a few lines are submitted in which the three heroines are presented sitting at a marble table on which stand rows of royal cups full of rich wines :—

"I saw thre gay ladeis sit in ane grene arbeir,
All grathit in to garlandis of fresche gudelie flouris;
So glitterit as the gold wer thair glorius gilt tressis,
Quhill all the gressis did gleme of the glaid hewis;
Kemmit was thair cleir hair, and curiouslie sched
Attour thair schulderis doun schyre, schyning full bricht;
With curches, cassin thame abone, of kirsp cleir and thin;
Thair mantillis grein war as the gress that grew in May sessoun,
Fetrit with thair quhyt fingaris about their fair sydis:
Off ferliful fyne favour war thair faceis meik,
All full of flurist fairheid, as flouris in June;
Quhyt, seimlie, and soft, as the sweit lillies;
New upspred upon spray, as new spynist rose,
Arrayit ryallie about with mony rich wardour,
That nature, full nobillie annamalit fine with flouris
Of alkin hewis under hewin, that ony heynd knew."[1]

One of the most extraordinary productions, from the modern point of view, of Dunbar's youth is the duet of vituperation and abuse in which he took part with Walter Kennedy (1460 ?–1508 ?).[2] *The Flyting*, as it is called, between the two is not wholly

[1] ll. 17–32.

[2] Some of Kennedy's other pieces, which, in spite of a homely and forcible manner of driving home religious truths, do not seem to call for more ample notice, will be found in Laing's edition of Dunbar.

without precedent or parallel,[1] nor was it destined to lack the approval of which imitation is the surest proof (see *post*, p. 215). It is simply a competition in invective, and the fertility of invention which the competitors display is truly astonishing. How far such a contest implied serious enmity on the part of the combatants is an open question. It has been inferred from Dunbar's allusion to Kennedy in the *Lament for the Makaris*[2] that the rivals were on excellent terms. On the other hand, a perusal of the *Flyting* rather leaves the impression that this was not exactly a "friendly" sparring match, but that the hearts of both were in their work. We may note, for example, that, while Dunbar taunts Kennedy with his Celtic descent, Kennedy has no scruple in taunting Dunbar with his poverty as contrasted with his own wealth—a topic which, according to modern notions, is quite inconsistent with the theory of friendship or good will.[3] However that may be,

[1] See Mackay, Introduction, i. p. cix. One celebrated specimen of flyting is commemorated in Douglas's lines—

> "And Poggius stude with mony girne and grone,
> On Laurence Valla spittand and cryand fy."
> (*The Palice of Honour*, Douglas's Works, ed. Small, i. p. 47.)

[2] *Works*, ii. p. 51, ll. 89 *et seq.*

[3] Thus Dunbar to that "Ersch Katherane," Kennedy :—

> "Forworthin fule, of all the warld reffuse,
> Quhat ferly is thocht thow rejoys to flyte ?
> Sic eloquence as thay in Erschry use,
> In sic is set thy thraward appetyte ;
> Thow hes full littill feill of fair indyte :
> I tak on me ane pair of Lowthiane hippis
> Sall fairar Inglis mak, and mair parfyte,
> Than thow can blabbar with thy Carrick lippis."
> *The Flyting*, ll. 105–12.

And thus Kennedy to Dunbar :—

> "Thow has a tome purs, I have stedis and takkis,
> Thow tynt cultur, I haif cultur and pleuch,
> Substance and geir, thou has a wedy teuch
> On Mount Falconn, about thy crag to rax."
> *Ibid.*, ll. 365–68.

there is certainly no want of energy or noise in the fray. Where the two parties seem so bent upon winning the victory, and so little fastidious in their choice of weapons, the selection of a continuous passage is almost impossible ; but the following stanza, while believed to be free from serious offence, will show what Dunbar is like when he is thoroughly roused up, and has warmed to his task :—

> " Mauch muttoun, vyle buttoun, peilit gluttoun, air to Hilhouse ;
> Rank begar, ostir dregar, foule fleggar in the flet ;
> Chittirlilling, ruch rilling, lik schilling in the milhouse ;
> Baird rehator, theif of natour, fals tratour, feyndis gett ;
> Filling of tauch, rak sauch, cry crauch, thow art our sett ;
> Mutton dryver, girnall ryver, jad-swyver, fowll fell the ;
> Herretyk, lunatyk, purspyk, carlingis pet,
> Rottin crok, dirtin dok, cry cok, or I sall quell the." [1]

The scheme of the *Flyting* may not be very attractive to readers of the present day. But we cannot help raising hands of amazement and admiration at the immense spirit and " go " of lines such as these, with their almost more than Aristophanic lavishness of scurrility.

Of Dunbar's moral and reflective poems the most impressive and beautiful is his celebrated *Lament for the Makaris quhen he was seik*.[2] The text is no new one, but rarely has a better sermon been preached upon it. The poet begins by telling us how he is troubled with great sickness, and he gives utterance to the gloomy reflections to which such a misfortune naturally gives rise :—

> " Onto the ded gois all Estatis,
> Princis, prelotis, and potestatis,
> Baith riche and pur of all degre ;
> Timor mortis conturbat me." [3]

All sorts and conditions of men, he points out, must yield to

[1] *The Flyting*, ll. 241–48. [2] *Works*, ii. p. 48. [3] ll. 17–20.

that "strang unmercifull tyrand" who spares not the babe, "full of benignite," at its mother's breast.

"He takis the campion in the stour,
The capitane closit in the tour,
The lady in bour full of bewte;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

"He spairis no lord for his piscence,
Na clerk for his intelligence;
His awfull strak may no man fle;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

"Art—magicianis and astrologgis,
Rethoris logicianis, and theologgis,
Thame helpis no conclusionis sle;
Timor mortis conturbat me."[1]

He presently passes on to men of his own calling:—

"I see that makaris amang the laif
Playis heir ther pageant, syne gois to graif;
Sparit is nocht ther faculte;
Timor mortis conturbat me."[2]

And then he proceeds to enumerate a number of poets, from Chaucer to Kennedy, whom death has cut off.[3] The concluding verses are melancholy in the extreme:—

"Sen he has all my brether tane,
He will naught let me lif alane,
On forse I man his nyxt pray be;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

[1] ll. 29–40. [2] ll. 45–48.

[3] In this list, which is of the great value to the historian of Scottish literature, Dunbar refers to the following "Makaris" in addition to those who are elsewhere mentioned in this work: Heryot; John Clerk (the reputed author of, *inter alia*, *The Wowing of Jok and Jynny*); James Afflek; Mungo Lockhart; Clerk of Tranent; Sandy Traill; Patrick Johnstoun (to whom has been attributed *The Three Deid Powis*, with which the Maitland MS. credits Henryson); Mersar (author of *The Perell of Paramours*, and probably of two specimens of the "aphoristic love ballad"); Roull of Aberdeen (?), or Corstorphine (?); Sir John the Ros; Stobo; and Quintyne Schaw (cousin of Walter Kennedy, and author of *Advyce to a Courtier*).

Sen for the deid remeid is non,
Best is that we for dede dispone,
Eftir our deid that lif may we ;
Timor mortis conturbat me." [1]

Admirable as this fine poem is—and it ranks with the very choicest of Dunbar's achievement—his strength lies mainly in satire. It is not the formal satire of a Juvenal, but a more brisk and nimble, a less measured and stately sort, founded upon a shrewd observation of individual peculiarities and weaknesses, and possessed of a distinctive flavour which is quite unmistakable. In satire of a general scope he does not pre-eminently excel, except possibly in the poem, *This nycht in my sleip I wes agast*,[2] which is extremely good. We have already alluded to his wholesale attack upon contemporary manners in *Devorit with Dreme*. Dunbar requires some particular set of facts or persons to be present to his mind before he can exert his powers to their utmost. Thus the *Tidings from the Session* [3] has a "backbone" in it which the last-mentioned piece lacks, though it would be rash to infer that the Session was hopelessly corrupt and incapable.

"Sum castis summondis, and sum exceptis ;
Sum standis besyd and skaild law keppis ;
Sum is continwit, sum wynnis, sum tynis ;
Sum makis him mirry at the wynis ;
Sum is put owt of his possessioun ;
Sum herreit, and on creddens dynis :
Sic tydingis hard I at the Sessioun." [4]

Is there any law court in the world of which, *mutatis mutandis*, these lines would not stand for a fair satirical description ?

It is true that in *The Dance of the Sevin deidly Synnis* [5] he appears to have no special individuals in view. But, thanks

[1] ll. 93–100. [2] *Works*, ii. p. 144. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. p 78. [4] ll. 29–35.
[5] *Works*, ii. p. 117.

partly to the vogue of Allegory, partly to the vogue of the Miracle Play and the Masque, Dunbar is able to personify Pride, Ire, Envy, Avarice, and the rest, with extraordinary vividness. Besides, he is also able to wind up with a fling at the Highlanders, as thus :—

"Then cryd Mahoun for a Heland padyane;
Syne ran a feynd to feche Makfadyane,
Far northwart in a nuke;
Be he the correnoch had done schout,
Erschemen so gadderit him abowt,
In Hell grit rowme thay tuke.

Thae tarmegantis, with tag and tatter,
Ffull lowd in Ersche begowth to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke:
The Devill sa devit wes with thair yell
That in the depest pot of hell
He smorit thame with smuke."

This is precisely the vein of *Tam o' Shanter*. But indeed the jesting and ironical spirit in which Dunbar almost invariably treats Mahoun is indistinguishable from that in which Burns handles the same personage.

The *Dance*, then, is one of Dunbar's masterpieces. If a class list must be made, *The Freiris of Berwik* is probably, the *Lament for the Makaris* is certainly, another. But the poem which I should be disposed to place highest—if not in respect of beauty or accomplishment, nevertheless in respect of significance and depth—is the curious *Testament of Mr. Andro Kennedy*,[1] the work of a Browning, as it were, born out of due time. The "Testament" was a well-known literary convention of the Middle Ages, whereby an author was enabled to put such sentiments as he desired to give utterance to into the mouth of some person, real or imaginary. Here the device is used to enable opinions to be expressed

[1] ii, p. 54.

which would not have misbecome the boldest and most liberal thinkers among the crew that gathered at Poosie Nancy's. Kennedy seems to have been a free-living physician, and in this *Testament* he is made to bequeath his soul to "my lordis wyne cellair," and his "corpus ebriosum" to the town of Ayr, to be placed upon a midden where draff is in the habit of being deposited. It is unnecessary to enumerate all his other bequests. Suffice it to quote the two concluding verses :—

"In die meae sepulturae
I will nane haif bot our awne gyng;
Et duos rusticos de rure
Berand a barell on a styng;
Drynkand and playand cop out, evin,
Sicut egomet solebam;
Singand and gretand with hie stevin,
Potum meum cum fletu miscebam.

"I will na priestis for me sing,
Dies illa, Dies irae;
Na yit na bellis for me ring,
Sicut semper solet fieri;
Bot a bagpipe to play a spryng,
Et unum ail wosp ante me;
In stayd of baneris for to bring
Quatuor lagenas ceruisie,
Within the graif to set sic thing,
In modum crucis juxta me,
To fle the fends, than hardely sing
De terra plasmasti me." [1]

It would be both unfair and unintelligent to imagine that these are the sentiments of Dunbar himself, though at one time he seems to have been suspected of dabbling in the

[1] ll. 97–116. On the singular mixture of the Latin and Scots tongues (which is not, strictly speaking, to be termed "macaronic"), see Mr. Gregor's note in the S. T. S. ed. of Dunbar, iii. p. 99. It seems tolerably clear that the idea of such a medley came from the preacher's habit of quoting the Vulgate and then explaining the passages so quoted in the vernacular.

heresies of the Lollards. The whole piece is essentially a dramatic soliloquy. But it is a striking illustration of the lengths to which it was possible to go in the direction of "free thinking" in the era before the Reformation.[1] A poet who had ventured upon corresponding deviations from the narrow path of Protestant orthodoxy during the supremacy of the Saints would have been sorely shent for his pains.

The most abiding impression left upon the mind by a reviewal of Dunbar's poems as a whole is that of his immense resources and of his splendid prodigality in employing them. Never was poet less parsimonious of his means, less troubled with care for the morrow. He squanders his treasure with a princely generosity, yet he never reaches the bottom of his purse. To rhyme he adds abundant alliteration, and, when pure alliteration is his choice, he must needs, of his bounty, provide a very superfluity of the device, carrying on the use of the same letter to a second line, and supplying an even larger number of alliterating syllables in one line than the rules of the metre require.[2] The more tasks of this nature he sets himself, the more adequately he performs them; the more formidable the obstacles he places in his own path, the more triumphantly he surmounts them; the heavier the fetters with which he loads himself, the more graceful and easy becomes his every movement. His vocabulary is practically inexhaustible.[3] In pieces like the *Brash of Wowing* and the *Flyting*, he pours out a perfect torrent of words, and leaves you wondering that the stream should ever cease. But it is in the command of every

[1] It will be borne in mind that the *Testament* was included in Chepman and Myllar's volume of 1508.

[2] For a detailed study of Dunbar's versification, consult Mr. G. P. M'Neill's learned and elaborate *excursus* on the subject in the S. T. S. ed. of Dunbar, i. p. clxxii. See also Schipper, *Altenglische Metrik*, Bonn, 1882–88, and the same author's *Grundriss der Englischen Metrik*, 1895.

[3] Lyndsay, in the Prologue to his *Papyngo* (l. 17) speaks of "Dunbar quhilk language had at large," but he obviously has in mind the "aureate" poems, for he proceeds to cite as an instance the *Goldyn Targe*.

sort of measure that Dunbar's mastery of his craft is most noteworthy. The extracts which have been already submitted will have enabled the reader to form some notion of his gift in this respect. But to appreciate his astonishing versatility we must go to his collected works. No sort of metre, however difficult —no interweaving of rhymes, however intricate—can appal Dunbar. Here is a verse from *Ane ballat of our Lady* :—

"Hail, sterne superne ! Hail, in eterne,
In Godis sycht to schyne !
Lucerne in derne, for to discerne
Be glory and grace devyne ;
Hodiern, modern, sempitern,
Angelicall regyne !
Our tern infern for to dispern,
Helpe rialest rosyne.
Aue Maria, gratia plena !
Haile, fresche flour femynyne !
Zerne ws, guberne, wirgin matern,
Of reuth baith rute and ryne." [1]

Here too is a specimen of the Epitaph on Donald Oure, or Donald Dubh :—

"In vice most vicius he excellis,
That with the vice of tressone mellis ;
Thocht he remissioun
Haif for prodissioun,
Schame and susspissioun
Ay with him dwellis.
. . . . .
The fell strong tratour, Donald Owyr,
Mair falsett had nor udir fowyr ;
Rownd ylis and seyis
In his suppleis,
On gallow treis
Yitt dois he glowir." [2]

[1] *Works*, ii. p. 269. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 190.

And here are two fragments from the *Dregy*[1] which sufficiently evince his mastery of the most intractable French models :—

"God and Sanct Jeill heir yow convoy
Baith sone and weill, God and Sanct Jeill
To sonce and seill, solace and joy,
God and Sanct Geill heir yow convoy.
Out of Strivilling [Stirling] panis fell
In Edinburght joy sone mot ye dwell
. . . . .
Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling;
Frome hiddouss hell cum hame and dwell,
Quhair fische to sell is non bot spirling;
Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling."

It may safely be asserted that not one of Dunbar's contemporaries who wrote in the literary dialect of the Southern portion of the island could boast anything like the dexterity and nimbleness with which his fingers swept the keys. Such performance as those just cited may be open to the objection of being mere *tours de force;* but, at least, the *tours de force* are superbly executed.

It is singular that Dunbar's supreme excellence in his art did not prevent his writings from falling for a long period into oblivion. While Sir David Lyndsay's works were reprinted or re-issued several times in the course of the sixteenth century, and while they lingered, at all events as a tradition, in the memory of the people, Dunbar was forgotten, and, but for the labours of George Bannatyne and other diligent scribes, his writings might have perished. No doubt he was unfortunate in not living to see the revival of printing in Scotland—an art of which the practice was all but suspended for twenty years. But it may be suspected also that the populace found more to interest it in the works of Lyndsay than in those of the

[1] ii. p. 112.

older poet, who had written chiefly for the Court, and it is indisputable that the former supplied much stronger meat than the latter to a generation whose appetite had been sharp set by the vigorous and exhausting controversies of the Reformation. To Allan Ramsay belongs the enviable honour of having been the first to *déterrer* Dunbar ; and since 1724 the reputation of the great poet has been satisfactorily and completely rehabilitated, no one having contributed more to that end than Thomas Warton. With such of his work as was printed in *The Evergreen* and by Lord Hailes, Burns was doubtless familiar, although he does not appear to have been conscious of being specially influenced by it. But the similarity of tone and spirit, and even to some extent of method, between Dunbar and Burns, with nearly three centuries of time to separate them is not the least remarkable phenomenon in Scottish literature, and entirely justifies the contention of those who insist upon the essential indivisibility of the Scottish vernacular school of poetry.[1] Though Scott wrote of Dunbar enthusiastically in his later years, there is no trace in his verse of Dunbar's immediate influence ; but at a subsequent date in the nineteenth century it emerges in a quarter where its presence might naturally have been looked for, but has perhaps not been generally recognised. On the literary, as on the artistic, side of what is conveniently known as the pre-Raphaelite movement there were many agencies at work ; and no one who is familiar with the first series of Mr. Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* can help conjecturing that in his case one of the most potent and stimulating was the work of William Dunbar.

Gavin Douglas [2] (1475–1522), a poet whose fame, curiously enough, has almost equalled that of Dunbar, was a son of Archibald, Earl of Angus, well remembered by his nickname of "Bell-the-Cat." Educated at St Andrews, where he took

[1] See Henley, *Essay*, in Centenary Edition of Burns, vol. iv. p. 265.

[2] The only complete edition of Douglas's works is that edited by Small, 4 vols., Edin., 1874.

his Master's degree in 1494, he entered the Church, and from the cure of Monymusk in Aberdeenshire was translated to the doubtless more lucrative benefices of East Linton and Prestonkirk in the Lothians. In 1501, he was appointed Provost of the important collegiate Church of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and in the same year he wrote his *Palice of Honour*. We know little of his history during the succeeding years, but it seems not improbable that much of his time was devoted to literature. He is said to have translated Ovid, though no fragment of the work has been preserved, and there are ascribed to him certain "Aureae narrationes"—historical tractates, it would appear—as well as certain sacred dramas, which are equally unknown to posterity. But his *King Hart*, a characteristic piece of allegory, has survived the chances of time, and so has a short poem alleged to be his, entitled *Conscience*, the familiar theme of which is the maladministration of patronage in the Kirk.

In July, 1513, appeared Douglas's *magnum opus*, his translation of the *Aeneid*, which had occupied him a year and a half in composition. It was his intention, on the completion of this undertaking, to "direct" his "labours evermoir Unto the commonwelth and Goddis gloir"; in other words, to devote himself to politics. The disaster of 1513 opened up what must have seemed to his ambition a most promising avenue. As a Lord of the Council and Provost of St. Giles he was in constant attendance upon the widowed Queen, and it is a very natural supposition that the marriage which she contracted with his nephew, the young Earl of Angus, within a year of Flodden was in part of his contriving. That alliance once cemented, and the power of the Douglases established upon an apparently solid foundation, it must have looked as if the ball were now fairly at his feet. But everything went wrong. The rich Abbey of Arbroath, and the still richer Archbishopric of St. Andrews, were snatched from his very grasp, and conferred upon rivals. Even when he had been

appointed to the "Bishopric of fair Dunkeld" in 1515,[1] it was not without difficulty that he established himself in the saddle. For a year or so he actually underwent the penalty of imprisonment. It is unnecessary, however, to narrate in detail the broils and intrigues by which this unhappy period of our history is characterised, and in which Douglas played a considerable part. The upshot of it all was that, upon the return to Scotland in 1421 of the Regent Albany, who represented the French or National as opposed to the Douglas or English interest, he retired to London, where he died of the plague in 1522. The last nine years of his life were barren as regards literature; and it cannot but be regretted that one so well qualified to excel in that department should have wasted his talents in a sphere in which he met with almost nothing but failure. The "pride of prelacy" must have been something stronger in his blood, if not in his eye, than Sir Walter Scott represents.

The judgments passed by critics upon Douglas's work have sometimes been distinguished rather by enthusiasm than discretion. It has been customary to hail him as the herald of a new dawn, the precursor of the new movement in poetry which reached its goal in the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth; in brief, as "the earliest literary fruit of the Renaissance in Scotland."[2] This view is supported by the high authority of Mr. Courthope, and it is tempting at first sight to regard the first translator of an ancient poetical masterpiece into English as a pioneer in the return to an intelligent and humane study of the classics. On the other hand, it is forcibly contended that Douglas consistently looked, not forward, but back, and that, in place of giving the signal

[1] It will thus be seen that when the Bishop appears "with mitre sheen and rocquet white" in canto vi. of *Marmion*, he had not yet in reality attained that step in the hierarchy.

[2] *History of the House of Douglas*, by Sir Herbert Maxwell (2 vols., 1902), ii. p. 55.

for a new poetry with a new convention, he was more faithful that any of his contemporaries to the literary tradition of the fifteenth century. The question can only be settled by reference to the poems themselves, and an apology for giving a somewhat detailed account of *The Palice of Honour* is the less needed that it is, on the face of it, a good and characteristic specimen of the courtly allegory, in which the allegory of chivalry and the allegory of religion became blended and merged. We know that the Court of James IV. was one at which "Tryumphand tournays, justyng, and knychtly game"[1] abounded; and we may be tolerably confident that it was the taste of that Court which the author, consciously or unconsciously, consulted, in composing what must be described as, not merely an instructive, but also, a most interesting piece.

The Palice of Honour, then, is an allegorical poem of over 2,000 lines, written in stanzas of nine lines, rhymed thus :— *aab aab bab*. It opens with the familiar description of a May morning in a "garden of plesance," in which the poet falls asleep and has a vision. He dreams that he is in the midst of a forest, hard by a "hyddeous flude" resembling Cocytus. Presently there appears upon the scene the Queen of Sapience, the Lady Minerve, attended by a large number of "ladyis fair and gudlie men." Among this band are all the sages of antiquity, sacred and profane, who are duly enumerated :—

> "And there is als into yone court gone hence
> Clerkis divine with problewmis curius ;
> As Salomon the well of sapience,
> And Aristotell fulfillit of prudence,
> Salust, Senek, and Titus Livius,
> Pithagoras, Porphyre, Permenydus,
> Melysses with his sawis but defence,
> Sidrach, Secundus, and Solenyus.

[1] Lyndsay, *Papyngo*, l. 502.

Ptholomeus, Ipocras, Socrates,
Empedocles, Neptenabus, Hermes,
Galien, Averroes, and Plato,
Enoch, Lamech, Job, and Diogenes,
The eloquent and prudent Ulisses,
Wise Josephus, and facund Cicero,
Melchisedech, with uther mony mo.
Thair veyage lyis throw out this wildernes,
To the Palice of Honour all thay go."[1]

The poet is enabled to identify these characters from information imparted to him by Achitophel and Sinon, who farther tell him that the whole party is bound for the Palace of Honour. To Minerva succeeds Actaeon, pursued and destroyed by his own hounds, in whose wake comes Diana with *her* retinue, embracing Jephthah's daughter, "a lustie lady gent," and Iphigenia. These in turn are succeeded by Venus and her Court, which of course includes Cupid, "the god maist dissavabill." The Goddess arrives in a chariot, drawn by twelve coursers (whose rich trappings are carefully noted, down to the "raw silk brechamis ouir thair halsis"), and the following is the description of her appearance :—

"Amid the chair fulfillit of plesance
Ane lady sat, at quhais obeysance
Was all that rout, and wonder is to hear
Of hir excelland lustie countenance,
His hie bewtie quhilk is to avance
Precellis all, thair may be na compeir ;
For like Phebus in hiest of his spheir,
Hir bewtie schane castand sa greit an glance,
All fairheid it opprest baith far and neir.

Scho was peirles of schap and portrature,
In hir had nature finischit hir cure,
As for gude havings thair was nane bot scho,
And hir array was sa fine and sa pure,
That quhairof was hir rob I am not sure,

[1] *The Palice of Honour*, Works, i. p. 11.

For nocht bot perle and stanis micht I se,
Of quhome the brightnes of hir hie bewtie
For to behald my sicht micht not indure,
Mair nor the bricht sone may the bakkis ee.

Hir hair as gold or topasis was hewit,
Quha hir beheld hir bewtie ay renewit.
On heid scho had a crest of dyamantis.
Thair was na wicht that gat a sicht eschewit,
War he never sa constant or weill thewit,
Na he was woundit, and him hir servant grantis.
That hevinlie wicht, hir cristall ene sa dantis,
For blenkis sweit nane passit unpersewit,
Bot gif he wer preservit as thir sanctis." [1]

Her followers sing sweet concords,

"Proportionis fine with sound celestiall,
Duplat, triplat, diatesseriall,
Sesqui altera, and decupla resortis
Diapason of mony sindrie sortis,"

accompanied by all manner of musical instruments.

After mentioning by name a good many of the goddess's innumerable train, the poet proceeds to relate how he is rash enough to lift up his own voice in a ballad of inconstant love, whereupon he is instantly arrested and brought to trial before the Court of Venus. He takes exception to the jurisdiction, first, on the ground that "ladyis may be judges in na place," and, second, on the ground that he is a spirituall man (though he modestly professes to be "void of lair"), and ought to be remitted to his "judge ordinair."

"I yow beseik, Madame, [he goes on] with bissie cure,
Till give ane gratious interlocutoure,
On thir exceptiounis now proponit lait."

But Venus has no difficulty in summarily repelling these objections, and the poet is found guilty. While he is revolving

[1] *The Palice of Honour*, Works, i. p. 18.

in his mind the unpleasant nature of the punishment probably in store for him, and ruefully thinking of Actaeon, Io, Lot's wife, Nabuchodonosor, and other unfortunate culprits, enter a Court of poets, who are thus collectively described in lines from which perhaps we may infer Douglas's ideal of what a poet ought to be :—

"Yone is (quod thay) the court rethoricall,
Of polit termis, sang poeticall,
And constant ground of famous storeis sweit,
Yone is the facound well celestiall,
Yone is the fontane and originall,
Quhairfra the well of Helicon dois fleit,
Yone are the folk that comfortis everi spreit,
Be fine delite and dite angelicall,
Causand gros leid all of maist gudnes gleit.

Yone is the court of plesand steidfastnes,
Yone is the court of constant merines,
Yone is the court of joyous discipline,
Quhilk causis folk thair purpois to expres
In ornate wise, provokand with glaidnes
All gentill hartis to thair lair incline.
Everie famous poeit men may divine
Is in yone rout; lo yonder thair princess,
Thespis the mother of the musis nine."[1]

Then the Muses, whose Court the poets compose, appear in person, and the opportunity is taken of giving a somewhat mixed list of its members, which includes—

"Geffray Chauceir as *a per se* sans peir
In his vulgare, and morall Johne Goweir;"

Lydgate, the monk, and "of this natioun"—

"Greit Kennedie, and Dunbar yit undeid,
And Quintine with ane huttok on his heid."

[1] *The Palice of Honour*, Works, i. p. 33.

At the intercession of Calliope, Venus sets the poet free, on the condition (immediately complied with) that he shall recite a short, cheerful ballad in praise of that goddess, who presently disappears with her attendants. Calliope then puts the poet in charge of a nymph, "maist faithfull and decoir," and the two set out for the Palace of Honour. In the course of their travels, they pass many geographical features of interest, which are punctually catalogued; and among other interesting spots which they visit is the fountain of the Muses, where they are privileged to hear a recitation from both Ovid and Virgil. At length, in the midst of a plain, they reach a steep marble rock, with a single passage cut in the face, upon ascending which, and near the summit, they come upon a pit of burning brimstone, pitch, and lead, in which many wretches are weltering and yelling loudly. These are the slothful; and the obstacle presented by their place of punishment is speedily surmounted by the ingenuity of the poet's guide, who carries him across by the hair of his head. He then has a view of the wretched estate of the world, and witnesses the wreck of "the goodly carvell," the State of Grace, which affords the nymph a text for a terse exposition of the scheme of salvation.

The travellers now reach their destination, and this is how the Palace appears to the poet:—

"I saw ane plane of peirles pulchritude,
Quhairin aboundit alkin thingis gude
Spyce, wine, corne, oyle, tre, frute, flour, herbis grene,
All foulis, beistis, birdis, and alkin fude.
All maner fisches baith of sey and flude
War keipit in pondis of poleist silver schene,
With purifyit water as of the cristall clene,
To noy the small the greit beistis had na will,
Nor ravenous foulis the lytill volatill.

Still in the sessoun all things remanit thair,
Perpetuallie but outher noy or sair;
Ay rypit war baith herbis, frute, and flouris.

Of everie thing the namis to declair
Unto my febill wit unpossibill wair.
Amid the meid repleit with sweit odouris
A palice stude with mony royall towris
Quhair kyrnellis quent, feill tuerittis men micht find,
And goldin fanis waifand with the wind.

Pinnakillis, fyellis, turnpekkis mony one,
Gilt birneist torris, quhilk like to Phebus schone,
Skarsment, reprise, corbell, and battellingis,
Fulyery, bordouris of mony precious stone,
Subtile muldrie wrocht mony day agone,
On buttereis, jalme, pillaris, and plesand springis,
Quick imagerie with mony lustie singis
Thair micht be sene, and mony worthie wichts,
Befoir the yet arrayit all at richts."[1]

Venus is once more discovered upon a throne rich with jewels and cloth of gold, and in her mirror the poet is permitted to behold, at a glance, "the deeds and fates of every eirdlie wicht." This enables him to give us a bird's-eye view of universal history, on which we need scarcely dwell. The most interesting personages (from our point of view) whom he sees are those enumerated in the following stanza :—

"I saw Raf Coilzear with his thrawin brow,
Craibit Johne the Reif, and auld Cowkewyis sow ;
And how the wran came out of Ailssay ;
And Peirs Plewman that maid his workmen fow ;
Greit Gowmakmorne and Fyn Makcoul, and how
Thay suld be goddis in Ireland as they say ;
Thair saw I Maitland upon auld Beird Gray ;
Robene Hude, and Gilbert with the quhite hand,
How Hay of Nauchtoun flew in Madin land."[2]

Venus recognises the poet, and bids him translate a book which she gives him—the *Aeneid*, no doubt. He is then gratified with a sight of certain notorious personages vainly

[1] *The Palice of Honour*, Works, i. p. 54.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. p. 65.

attempting to effect an entrance into the palace. Among these is Catiline :—

"But suddenlie Tullius come with ane buik,
And straik him doun quhill all his chaftis quoik."

Next comes the roll of the Prince of Honour's household. Patience is his porter, Constancy his secretary, Liberality his treasurer, Discretion his comptroller, Conscience his chancellor, with four assessors, Science, Prudence, Justice, Sapience ; and so forth, and so forth. After a glimpse of the splendours which the interior of the Palace has to reveal, the nymph conducts the poet to the garden. In crossing the bridge by which access thereto is obtained, he falls into the water of the moat, and awakes from his slumber. The poem concludes with a ballad in praise of honour, a piece of versification which even the contemporary literature of Scotland can scarcely equal for elaboration and complexity. The reader will observe that in the first stanza there are but two internal rhymes in the line ; in the second there are three ; and in the third there are no less than four ; so that the whole is written, as it were, in a steady and unfaltering *crescendo*. If Douglas had no other title to fame, he would at least deserve to be remembered for this amazing exhibition of metrical gymnastics.

I.

"O hie *honour*, sweit hevinlie *flour* degest,
Gem verteous, maist precious, gudliest,
For hie renoun thou art guerdoun conding,
Of worschip kind the glorious end and rest,
But quhome in richt na worthie wicht may lest.
Thy great puissance may maist avance all thing,
And pouerall to meikle availl sone bring.
I the require sen thow but peir art best,
That efter this in thy hie blis we ring

II.

Of *grace* thy *face* in everie *place* sa schynis
That sweit all spreit baith heid and feit inclynis,
Thy gloir afoir for till imploir remeid.
He docht richt nocht quhilk out of thocht the tynis ;
Thy name but blame and royal fame divine is ;
Thow port at schort of our comfort and reid,
Till bring all thing till glaiding efter deid.
All wicht but sicht of thy greit micht ay crynis,
O schene I mene, nane may sustene thy feid.

III.

Haill *rois* maist *chois* till *clois* thy *fois* greit micht,
Haill stone quhilk schone upone the throne of licht,
Vertew, quhais trew sweit dew ouirthrew al vice,
Was ay ilk day gar say the way of licht ;
Amend, offend, and send our end ay richt.
Thow stant, ordant as sanct, of grant maist wise,
Till be supplie and the hie gre of price.
Delite the tite me quite of site to dicht,
For I apply schortlie to thy devise." [1]

Now, to what conclusion does our examination of *The Palice of Honour* seem to point ? Emphatically, I submit, to the inference that Douglas wrote with his eye on the past, not on the future ; that he was not casting about for new models, but was content to copy the old. That there are a few faint traces in him of a comparatively "modern" spirit is quite true. He wrote at the beginning of the sixteenth, not of the fifteenth century, and therefore did not scruple, for example, to make his hero challenge the jurisdiction of women in a court of love. To that extent the esoteric doctrine of the class concerned with chivalry had been affected by the views of the average man. But, otherwise, in Mr. Gregory Smith's phrase,[2] Douglas is "in spirit and in practice a mediævalist." Here are all the distinctive notes of the mediæval allegory ; the May

[1] *The Palice of Honour*, Works, i. p. 79.

[2] *The Transition Period*, p. 59. Mr. Smith's chapter on the Scottish Poets is a fine piece of suggestive and stimulating criticism.

morning; the dawn [1]; the convention of the vision; the (to us) incongruous blending of Hebrew and classical lore; the ill-ordered and rugged catalogues of personages, or places, or things [2]; the apparatus of the Court of Venus; the parade of learning, or, at all events, information; everything, in fine, which we should expect to meet with in the species of allegory of which the great representatives are *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *The Court of Love*, and *The House of Fame*. Douglas was no innovator or experimenter. He was of those who ask for the old paths and walk therein. The atmosphere, the *milieu*, the machinery, which had served the turn so well during the century that saw his birth, were still sufficient to satisfy his artistic requirements. Nor is there any trace of an experimental tendency in *King Hart*, an allegory in rhyme *plus* frequent alliteration (the stanza being *ab ab bc bc*), in which some have tried to catch an anticipation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* or *The Holy War*. Mr. Courthope may be correct in thinking that it shows "a great advance on the *Palice* in narrative power and in versification" [3]; but the Heart of Man, with its five servitors (*i.e.*, the senses), Queen Plesance, Foirsicht, Bewtie, Decrepitus, and all the rest of the personified abstractions, are old friends, and the poem is duller, albeit less diffuse, than the other.

But it may be said, we must go to Douglas's *Aeneid* [4] to

[1] In his *Reulis and Cautelis of Scottis Poesie*, a schoolboy essay, James VI. warns his readers "that ye descryve not the morning, and rysing of the Sunne in the preface of your verse: for thir thingis are sa oft and dyverslie written upon be Poetis already, that gif ye do the lyke, it will appeare ye bot imitate, and that it cummis not of your awin Inventioun" (Ed. 1900, p. 20).

[2] It is curious to note the contrast between the comparative ill-success of our mediæval poets in the handling of proper names, and the felicity of Virgil on the one hand, and Scott and Tennyson on the other.

[3] *History of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 376.

[4] The *Aeneid* was first printed in 1553 (in London in black letter), and was republished by Thomas Ruddiman in folio, with a glossary, in 1710. The Bannatyne Club issued an edition in 2 vols. in 1839. Small's edition is printed from the Elphinstone MS. in the University of Edinburgh.

see this modern spirit working in him. "No poet," says Mr. Courthope,[1] "ever drank more deeply of the spirit of Virgil" than he; "he is thoroughly interpenetrated with the Virgilian atmosphere," declares Mr. Henderson,[2] "and succeeds in communicating this to the reader." That Douglas was an ardent, and, up to a certain point, intelligent admirer of Virgil is undeniable. He is lavish, in the prologue to Book I., of

> "Laude, honour, praisingis, thankis infynite"

to Virgil's "dulce ornate fresch endite," and he proceeds to heap him with all the complimentary terms which were part and parcel of a poet's vocabulary in these aureate days.[3] It would be unfair to cast suspicion on the sincerity of such eulogy, and to reckon it mere lip- or pen-service, because it happens to be cast in the conventional mould of the period. But it may well be doubted (especially in view of the prologue to Book VI.) whether Douglas's Virgil was, in any essential particular, other than the Virgil of the Middle Ages, which is as much as to say that for Douglas he was Virgil, the theologian, the seer, the half-inspired, the necromancer almost, no less than Virgil the master of poetry or "Rethorik."

Neither in the language nor in the general effect of the translation, which is in rhymed heroic couplets, is there anything that by a legitimate stretch of speech can be called "Virgilian." Douglas professes to write in the tongue of the Scottish nation, and indeed is believed to be the first writer who described that tongue as Scots.[4] But he admits that he has been compelled to eke out the deficiencies

[1] *History of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 378.

[2] *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, p. 199.

[3] "Chosin cherbukle, cheif flour and cedir tree,
Lanterne, leidsterne, mirrour, and *a per se*," &c., &c.

[4] Lyndsay, it may be remembered, describes him as "In our *Inglis* rhetoric the rose" (*Papyngo*, Prol. l. 24).

of the Scots by bastard Latin, French, or English[1]; and, as a matter of fact, his Anglicisms, as well as his improvised words from the two other languages, are neither rare nor elegant.[2] The diction of Virgil was not precisely that of every-day life, but there is nothing in it of the startling, or the *bizarre*, or the "outlandish"; and these epithets are at times strictly applicable to Douglas's. Nor is the general impression produced by the translation in the least similar to that produced by the original. The former, indeed, though often verbose and pedestrian, is occasionally vigorous.

> "Heich as ane hill the jaw of watter brak,
> And in ane heip come on them with ane swak."[3]

Such a couplet is not without a certain rude merit of its own; but can any one pretend that it is a possible equivalent for any couplet of Virgil's? Test the book at all the most celebrated passages; judge it by the success with which it renders the second, or the fourth, or the sixth, book; and you are driven to the conclusion that, however fine it may be "*considering*," the task has been too much for the poet. I question if there is a single line capable of awakening the indescribable emotion—at once poignant and tender—of which Virgil possessed the precious secret.

Defeated in an appeal to the *Aeneid*, the supporters of the "new light," or Renaissance, theory of Douglas, are driven back upon the original prologues to its several books. Their sentiment and style, says Mr. Courthope,[4] show his love for Virgil even more than the translation does; and Mr. Hender-

[1] Works, ed. Small, vol. ii. p. 7.

[2] "Douglas was sensible that the use of exotic words was not a merit, but an inevitable defect in his work; yet some of his admirers affect to praise him for this defect, which they call enriching the language. So the wine-makers of this country enrich the genuine juice of the grape with sloe-juice, and other heterogeneous poisons" (D. Macpherson, Preface to his ed. of Wyntoun's *Cronykil*, 1795).

[3] Works, vol. ii. p. 28.

[4] *Ut sup.*

son,[1] though less decisive in his utterance, seems to share the same opinion. Now, of these prologues, those to the second and third books are short and insignificant. The first, in addition to Virgil's praises, contains a violent attack upon Caxton's version of the *Aeneid*, which is pronounced to resemble the original no more than the devil resembles St. Austin. Nothing Virgilian here. The fourth prologue descants, in no very novel or striking manner, upon the power of love, and the fifth renews the attack on Caxton. Nothing really Virgilian here, either. The prologue to Book VI. treats of Virgil the prophet, and the doctrine of a future life; the prologue to Book IX. is composed chiefly of moralising; while the prologue to Books X. and XI. are concerned, the one with the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, the other with chivalry human and divine. The Virgilian touch is still to seek. There remain the prologues to Books VII., VIII., XII., and XIII. (this last "ekit" to Virgil by Mapheus Vegius). If anything less in Virgil's manner be conceivable than the eighth, I have not yet come across it. It is written in an elaborate rhymed stanza, *plus* alliteration, with a wheel and bob, and it professes to depict the faults of the age. Here is an example:—

"The myllar mythis the multur wyth a met scant,
For drouth had drunkin up his dam in the dry yeir:
The cadgear callis furth his capill wyth crakis waill cant,
Calland the colzear ane knaif and culroun full queyr;
Sum schippart slayis the lordis sheip, and sais he is a sant,
Sum grenis quhill the gers grow for his gray meyr,
Sum sparis nothir spirituall, spousit wyf, nor ant,
Sum sells folkis sustinance, as God sendis the feyr,
Sum glasteris, and thay gang at all for gayt woll;
Sum spendis on the ald use,
Sum makis a tume ruse,
Sum grenis eftir a gus,
To fars his wame full."[2]

[1] *Ut sup.*

[2] Works, iii. p. 143.

As regards the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth prologues, it is said that they savour of the *Georgics*. The first-named purports to give a picture of winter, the two last of May and June; and the prologue to Book VII. certainly contains some excellent passages, one of which is here presented:—

"So bustuysly Boreas his bugill blew,
The deyr full dern doune in the dalis drew;
Smal byrdis flokand throw thik ronnis thrang
In chyrming and with cheping changit thair sang,
Sekand hidlis and hirnys thaim to hyde
Fra feirfull thudis of the tempestuous tyde.
The wattir lynnis routtis, and every lynde
Quhyslyt and brayt of the swouchand wynde.
Puire laboraris and byssy husband men
Went wayt and wery draglyt in the fen;
The silly scheip and thair lytill hyrd gromis
Lurkis undir le of bankis, wodys, and bromys;
And wthir dantit gretar bestial
Within thair stabillis sesyt into stall,
Sic as mulis, horsis, oxen, and ky,
Fed tuskit baris, and fat swyne in sty,
Sustenit war by mannis governance
On hervist and on symmeris purviance.
Widequhair with fors so Eolus schouttis schyll
In this congelyt sessoune scharp and chyll,
The caller air, penetrative and puire,
Dasying the bluide in every creature,
Maid seik warm stovis and beyne fyris hoyt,
In double garment cled and wyly coyt,
With mychty drink, and meytis comfortive,
Agayne the storme wyntre for to strive."[1]

Tastes are proverbially uncertain and irreconcilable in such matters, and critics like Mr. Courthope and Mr. Henderson are not lightly to be gainsaid; but I own that neither here nor in the May and June pieces am I able to detect the true Virgilian flavour, or to surprise the faintest echo of the Man-

[1] Works, iii. p. 76.

tuan's peculiarly "plangent" note (if one may resuscitate an adjective which did yeoman service in its day).

There appears, then, to be nothing in the *Aeneid* or the prologues to displace the inference to which, as we saw, the earlier poems irresistibly lead. The truth is that Dunbar has far more of the modern element in him than Douglas. Even in the "aureate" style he is the prelate's superior. Dunbar is always the unmistakable master of his medium; but there are moments when his verse appears to be Douglas's master, and not he the master of his verse. He is wanting in the firmness of touch—in the air of absolute supremacy—which mark Dunbar. And if this be true of the "aureate" vein, how much more is it the case with those realistic and humorous poems in which Dunbar joins hands with the modern world, and with his great successors, Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns! It is only in the eighth prologue that Douglas has attempted anything in this manner, and we feel at once how defective it is in point of directness and "bite," and how much it loses by the absence of the *narquois* tone in which Dunbar excelled. Douglas had little or nothing to commend him to the body of the people. He was essentially the poet of the lettered few, and inasmuch as fashions in learning change no less than in other things, he is unlikely to be restored to high favour with the moderately learned of to-day. But he must always occupy a prominent position in the estimation of the literary historian as the last great exponent in Scotland of mediæval canons of art; and, while it may be poor praise to say of him (what is the barest truth) that he is immeasurably superior, as a finished artist, to contemporaries like Hawes and Skelton, this negative merit may gladly be allowed to him, that he is wholly free from the grossness and brutality which occasionally disfigure the writings of Dunbar, and are the great blot on the fame of Lyndsay.

While Douglas continued after death to enjoy an academic reputation, and while the name of Dunbar was slowly sinking

into obscurity, a third poet had come to the front whose works, or, at least, whose name, long remained green in the memory of his countrymen :—

> "Still is thy name in high account
> And still thy verse has charms,
> Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount,
> Lord Lion King-at-Arms." [1]

Lyndsay (*circ.* 1490–*circ.* 1555) was born either in Fife, where "The Mount" is situated, or in East Lothian, where lies the property of Garmylton (or Garleton), which also belonged to his father. It is not known whether he went to school at Cupar or at Haddington, but there is reason for believing that he may have completed his studies at St. Andrews. We know that when he came to man's estate he became attached to the Court, and indeed held the post of "usher," or personal attendant, to the boy-king, James V., whom he was not slow to remind in later life of the relationship which had subsisted between them. He praises the blessed Trinity—

> "That sic ane wracheit worme hes maid so habyll
> Tyll sic ane Prince to be so greabyll ;" [2]

and he endeavours to reassert his influence over his former charge to the effect of turning him to better ways. Lyndsay was a more successful man than Dunbar had been. He was appointed to the office of Lyon King-at-Arms—at that time one of high importance—in 1529; and in that capacity was engaged in several missions to foreign Courts, notably in one to Brussels in 1531. The chief symptom, however, of the favour he found in the sight of his royal master is the astounding freedom, or rather license, of speech permitted to him. By that partiality alone can we account for his immunity from the vengeance of the Church during James's lifetime; and how he avoided getting into trouble after James's death is still

[1] *Marmion*, canto iv.
[2] *The Dreme*, ll. 27 and 28. For details see his *Complaynt*, ll. 87–98.

mysterious. In the words of his first publisher, Henrie Charteris, "Gif we sall consider and wey the tyme quhen he did wryte the maist part of thir warkis, being ane tyme of sa greit and blind ignorance, of manifest and horribill abhominationis and abusis : it is to be marvellit how he durst sa planelie invey aganis the wyeis of all men, bot cheiflie of the spirituall estait, being sa bludie and cruell boucheouris. He never ceissit baith in his grave and merie maters, in ernist and in bourdis, in writing and in words, to challenge and carp thame." [1] Whatever the explanation (and it must be remembered that he never formally or expressly abjured the older faith) he escaped without a scratch, dying, doubtless in his bed, about 1555. There is scarcely a country on the continent of Europe to-day where the systematic publication of such diatribes as he indulged in against the existing order in Church and State would not expose their author to the pains and penalties of the law. Even in England the public performance of a drama in the least degree resembling the *Satyre* in tone or aim would be absolutely out of the question.

The mass of work which Lyndsay left behind him (and we exclude from consideration his *Register of Scottish Arms*, a purely professional treatise) is considerable.[2] To the modern reader his poetry is apt to appear monotonous. Lyndsay was essentially a religious and political reformer ; not a "high-flying" one, being in truth rather of the hard-headed and common-sense type, but still a reformer. It is part of a reformer's business to find fault ; and there is no want of zeal or persistency in the manner in which Lyndsay discharges that branch of his duties. He attacks all classes of the community without fear or favour —from the king on his throne to the cobbler on his stool. But the clergy are the chief objects of his wrath ; and it must be

[1] Preface to the edition of 1568.

[2] A collected edition of his poems was printed in 1568. The *Satyre* was first printed in 1602. Modern editions are those of Chalmers, 3 vols., 1806 ; Laing, 3 vols., and also 2 vols., 1871 (convenient but here and there expurgated) ; and the E. E. T. S. edition, 1865–71.

confessed that the perpetual obtrusion of clerical shortcomings —justifiable as it probably was—is much less exciting for a modern student than it must have been for a contemporary. His technique, again, is occasionally open to criticism. While he sometimes shows a decided command of metre, at other times his numbers are apt to be halting and unmelodious. He is a curious mixture of the mediæval and the modern. In his serious moods he can be "aureate" with the best of them; but there are not wanting hints that he saw the ludicrous side of that form of euphuism. He employs a great deal of mediæval machinery without hesitation, and yet, like Dunbar, when he gives free play to his satirical propensities he is eminently realistic and modern. One of his gravest faults is his frequent and unnecessary coarseness, which it is impossible to justify by an appeal to the manners of the age. But it may be suspected that this very defect had something to do with his long-continued vogue; and his services as a telling advocate of Reformation principles[1] were too valuable to make it possible for the Protestant leaders to repudiate his assistance or to proscribe his works.

These we shall now proceed to consider in more or less strict chronological order, premising that in some cases the date is mere matter of conjecture. And first of *The Dreme* (1528), a poem of some 1,100 lines in rhyme royal (*ab ab bcc*). Here we have simply a specimen of our old friend the allegory. Remembrance conducts the poet from hell, through purgatory, limbo, and the firmament, up to heaven. Then comes a sort of metrical gazetteer of the world (the mediæval "catalogue" once again). Next an inquiry is instituted into the melancholy condition of Scotland—Why should she want justice and policy more than

[1] Scott speaks finely of—

"The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of his age,
And broke the keys of Rome."

Marmion, canto iv.

France, Italy, or England? Probably he hits upon the true solution when he propounds the question—

> "Sen we have lawis in to this countrie,
> Why want we lawis exercitioun,
> Who suld put justice till execution?"[1]

That "boustious berne," the Commonweal is brought on and interrogated as to his grievances; and, finally, the whole is wound up with an "Exhortatioun to the Kingis Grace" to do equal justice and forswear sack. The latter part of the poem is interesting because it strikes the notes upon which Lyndsay continued to harp during the whole of his life as a poet, if not as a member of the Parliament.

Next comes *The Complaynt of Schir David Lyndsay* (1529), a poem of about 500 lines in rhymed octosyllabics, in which the writer complains, though without bitterness, of neglect, and recapitulates his services to the King. To 1530 is ascribed *The Testament of the Papyngo*, a poem of 1,200 lines or so in rhyme royal, in which the poet avails himself of a familiar mediæval convention to lecture the King, the Courtiers, and the Church. In the first part he recommends the King to learn his business—

> "Quharefor, sen thou hes sic capacitie,
> To learn to play so plesandlie and syng,
> Ryd hors, ryn speris with gret audacitie,
> Shute with hand bow, crosbow, and culueryng,
> Amang the rest, schir, lerne to be ane Kyng:
> Kyith on that craft thy pringnant fresh ingyne,
> Grantit to the be Influence Diuine."[2]

In the second part he enlarges, for the edification of courtiers, upon the fickleness of fate; and in the third, and longest part, the "Communing betuix the Papyngo and hir Executouris," he

[1] Compare the speech of Pauper to the Parliament in the *Satyre*—

> "It had bene als gude ye had sleipit
> As to mak Acts and nocht be keipit."

[2] ll. 283–89. Even the stern Correction in the *Satyre* admits that kings are entitled to take their diversion in field-sports.

attacks the clergy. In *The Complaint of Bagsche* (octosyllables, in *ab ab bc bc*), and in *The Answer to the Kingis Flyting* (rhyme royal) which are both said to belong to 1536, he resumes two of these topics. The former is an admirably humorous little poem—much in the spirit of Burns's *Twa Dogs*—in which an umquhil favourite, but now disgraced, hound of the King's, supplanted in his master's regard by Bawté, points the moral of his experience. The latter—a reply to a poem which has perished—is an outspoken remonstrance with the King on his irregular life. Live more carefully, or you will ruin your health and vigour, is its very sensible burden. *The Deploratioun of Quene Magdalene* (rhyme royal) is a threnody on the King's first wife (who died in 1537, shortly after her arrival in Scotland), and is a good specimen of Lyndsay in his "aureate" vein. The following year can boast of two poems in a very different manner. *The justing betuix James Watsoun and Jhone Barbour*, two medical men attached to the Court, is a reminiscence of Dunbar, and is more remarkable for its primitive buffoonery than for any more attractive quality. The *Supplicatioun anent syde taillis* is a much superior performance. It strikes at two vagaries of female fashion which sorely vexed the soul of all Scottish social reformers: the wearing of veils and of long trains. The latter abuse had infected every class of society, as we learn from Lyndsay—

> "Kittok that clekkit was yestrene
> The morne will counterfute the Quene.
> Ane mureland Meg that mylkis the yowis,
> Claggit with clay abone the howis,
> In barn nor byir scho wyll nocht byde
> Without hir kirtyll taill be syde." [1]

The versification is vigorous and fluent, and it will readily be believed that the subject was admirably adapted to Lyndsay's peculiar cast of humour. So much so is that the case as to

[1] ll. 65–70.

preclude any further attempt at quotation here. *Kitteis Confessioun* (*circ.* 1540), a trenchant and effective attack in the same metre upon the Confessional, lends itself equally ill to illustration by means of extracts in a modern work.

Reserving, in the meantime, consideration of the *Satyre*, we come next to *The Tragedy* (1547), the subject of which is the murder of Cardinal Beaton, whose ghost is introduced, and in *rime royal* warns his brother priests and the princes of the earth to take a lesson from his fate. The moral of the piece is, that preferment in the Church should be bestowed upon suitable and deserving people. As much trouble should be taken by kings in the selection of bishops and priests, as they take in the choice of their *chefs*, their tailors, and their cordwainers, who depend for promotion solely upon merit. This is a homely illustration which Lyndsay repeated in his works more than once, and which he is said to have employed with great effect in private conversation with the King. It looks like an interesting anticipation of the great modern doctrine of "efficiency."

The Historie of Squyer Meldrum (1550) is something in quite another kind than any poem of Lyndsay's which we have yet considered. It consists of 1,600 lines in rhymed octosyllabic verse, *plus* 250 of Testament in *rime royal*, and it purports to narrate the life-story of William Meldrum, the laird of Cleish and Binnis, who belongs to the class of hero that used to be called "Ouidaesque."

> "He was ane munyeoun for ane dame,
> Meik in chalmer lyk ane lame;
> Bot, in the feild, ane campioun;
> Rampand lyk ane wyld lyoun."

His warlike career opens at the sacking of Carrickfergus, where he rescues a beautiful lady, who incontinently falls in love with him, but is politely repulsed. He then takes service with the King of France against Henry VIII., and defeats

the English champion, Talbot, in single combat, both parties behaving with the most perfect courtesy and chivalry. He is, naturally, made much of at the French Court, but sets sail for Scotland, and in the Channel has a fierce battle with an English man-of-war, in which he is completely successful. The sea-fight is described with considerable spirit.

"Be this, the Inglis artailye
Lyke hailschot maid on thame assailye,
And sloppit throw thair fechting saillis,
And divers dang out ouir the waillis.
The Scottis agane, with all thair micht,
Of gunnis than thay leit fle ane flicht,
That thay micht weill see quhair thay wair,
Heidis and armes flew in the air.
The Scottis schip scho wes sa law
That monie gunnis out ouir hir flaw,
Quhilk far beyond thame lichtit doun ;
Bot the Inglis greit galyeoun
Fornent thame stude, lyke ane strang castell
That na Scottis gunnis micht na way faill,
But hat hir ay on the richt syde,
With monie ane slop, for all hir pryde,
That monie ane beft wer on thair bakkis ;
Than rais the reik with uglie crakkis,
Quhilk on the sey maid sic ane sound,
That in the air it did redound ;
That men might weill wit, on the land,
That shippis wer on the sey fechtand." [1]

On returning to Scotland, Meldrum, like the heroes of later generations, is "banquetted from hand to hand" by his admiring countrymen.

His next adventure is with a beautiful lady in Strathearn, whose hair was "like the reid gold wyre," and with whom he takes up his abode. He becomes her protector, and successfully recovers a castle in the Lennox belonging to her, which had been seized by the Macfarlanes. He resumes his life at the lady's home, and she bears him a daughter. The triumphant

[1] ll. 721–42.

tenor of his existence is, however, interrupted by the machinations of a wicked knight, who lays an ambush for him, and by whose bravoes he is left grievously wounded, after performing unheard of deeds of valour. His convalescence is so long, that he himself adopts the profession of chirurgeon. The lady is separated from him by her relatives, who compel her to marry another against her will. The squire himself never marries, but finally at—

> "the Struther, into Fyfe,
> His saul with joy angelicall
> Past to the Hevin Imperiall."

There follows his Testament, in which these points may be noted. He will suffer no priest in his funeral procession except one "of Venus professioun"; nor will he have any requiem,

> "But Alleluya with melodie and game."

He takes a tender farewell of the ladies of France and England, who, he knows, will regret him and "mak dule and drerie cheer"; and, more specifically, he bids adieu to his "day's darling" of Carrickfergus, and, above all, to the "Star of Strathearn."

> "Fair weill! ye lemant lampis of lustines
> Of fair Scotland: adew! my Ladies all.
> During my youth, with ardent besines,
> Ye knaw how I was in your service thrall.
> Ten thousand times adew! above thame all,
> Sterne of Stratherne, my Ladie Soverane,
> For quhom I sched my blud with mekill pane.
>
> Yit, wald my Ladie luke, at evin and morrow
> On my legend at length, scho wald not mis
> How, for hir saik, I sufferit mekill sorrow.
> Yit, give I micht, at this time get my wis,
> Of hir sweit mouth, deir God I had ane kis.
> I wis in vane: allace! we will dissever.
> I say na mair: sweit hart, adew for ever!"[1]

[1] Ll. 225–38.

These stanzas seem to mark the high-water mark of Lyndsay's achievement in the field of high and serious poetry.

Few poems of their time are so difficult to "place" or classify as *Squyer Meldrum*, of so many different and incongruous elements is it composed. In the generosity and magnanimity of the various combatants, we have an echo of the romance of chivalry; in the hero's prodigious feats of arms, we catch the strains of the wandering minstrel; in the love affair with the lady of Strathearn, we find many of the incidents associated with and characteristic of the vulgar tale of intrigue or adultery; and in one passage we cannot acquit the poet of the most odious of all literary offences against propriety—the snigger, or, at least, the leer.[1] It is an inevitable result of this singular mixture that the piece as a whole should have little artistic purpose or unity, and should be impossible to label as good romance, good ballad, or good *conte*. Yet to this serious drawback Lyndsay's audience was probably insensible. There was something for everybody's taste; and if the poem failed to conform to the canons of art, at all events it told an interesting enough story in an interesting enough way, and was enlivened by many thrilling episodes.

The last in date of Lyndsay's writings is the portentous *Monarchie*, or the *Dialogue betuix Experience and ane Courteour* (1553). It provides us with a history of the Universe from the Creation to the Day of Judgment in over 6,000 lines of octosyllabics, interspersed with a few dissertations in *rime royal* on themes of a more or less theological complexion (such as the "open Bible" and the worship of images), and these are by far the best passages in an otherwise somewhat tedious work. The conception of the poem is essentially mediæval, and so is the framework. We begin with the usual walk on a May morning at sunrise, and the story is put into the mouth of an "ageit man," Experience. The real thread of connection, however, between the various events recounted, is

[1] See l. 1153 *et seq.*

hostility to the corruptions of Rome. That Lyndsay was in earnest on that feeling no one can doubt, and it is significant that he declines the aid of the muses in his opening verses, beseeching the Almighty Himself to be his muse. But to what extent soever we may be disposed to sympathise with his opinions, the method which he selected for expressing them has little attraction for the ordinary reader of to-day.

Lyndsay would occupy far less conspicuous a place in the roll of Scottish poets but for his unique work, *Ane pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, of which some account must now be given. The *Satyre* is a "morality" of between 5,000 and 6,000 lines, and was produced at Cupar, in 1535 according to Chalmers, in 1540 according to the better opinion, and subsequently presented both at Linlithgow and Edinburgh. We cannot suppose that it stood alone in the literature of the age. The Scotland of the Middle Ages, though not proverbially "merry" like its neighbour, was nevertheless a country in which pageants and what may be called dramatic allegory played their due part in the life of the people. The taste for such spectacles had probably been fostered by James IV., and we know that the visit of his consort to Aberdeen was made the occasion of a gorgeous display, in which all ranks of the townspeople participated. The proper organisation of entertainments of the sort was, no doubt, one of Lyon's duties; and it may be conjectured that Lyndsay performed it *con amore*. Yet, common as miracle plays and moralities must have been in Scotland, the *Satyre* is absolutely the only specimen of its class which has come down to us, with the exception of the merest fragment by Dunbar (*supra*, p. 59). Fortunately, the *Satyre* has been preserved practically complete.

The play opens with the entrance of Diligence, who acts throughout in the threefold capacity of chorus, messenger, and herald, and who now announces the approach of King Humanity and summons the three estates—the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Burgesses—to meet him. The

King, forthwith appears, and after offering up a solemn prayer for grace to govern properly, takes his seat upon the royal throne with a grave face. He is approached by Wantounness and Placebo, and the former addresses him thus :—

"My Soveraine Lord and Prince but peir,
Quhat garris yow mak sic dreirie cheir ?
Be blyth, sa long as ye ar heir,
And pas tyme with pleasure :
For als lang leifis the mirrie man
As the sorie, for ocht he can.
His banis full sair, Sir, sall I ban
That dois yow displeasure."

Wantounness suggests, accordingly, that Solace should be sent for. Where *is* Solace ? asks Placebo. Wantounness replies :—

"I left Solace, that same greit loun,
Drinkand into the burrows toun :
It will cost him halfe of ane croun
Althocht he had na mair.
And, als, he said hee wald gang see
Fair ladie Sensualitie,
The beriall of all bewtie,
And portratour preclair."

Solace then enters—Sandie Solace, whose mother, "bonnie Besse, that dwellt between the Bowis," must have been, by his own confession, a far from reputable person. Solace explains to the King that he has just seen the most beautiful woman, with "lippis reid and cheikis quhyte," and dressed in the latest fashion—"clad on the new gyse." The King protests that she is not for him, and that, so far as immorality goes, he has hitherto been *tanquam tabula rasa;* but Wantounness, Placebo, and Solace unite in pointing to the example of the Kirk, and in bidding him, "fall to, *in nomine Domini.*" Does not the book say, "*Omnia probate*"—prove all things ?

At this point, Sensualitie appears, and introduces herself in an "aureate" speech, which she concludes by proposing a song

to Venus. What is this merrie song? inquires the King of his three courtiers; and, at their pressing entreaty, he orders Sensualitie to be brought to him. Wantounness and Solace accost her, and induce her to come to the King, whom Wantounness obligingly offers to "coach" for the interview. Sensualitie then delivers an "aureate" address to Venus, and at the King's command is led off to his chamber by Solace, while Wantounness pairs off with her handmaiden, Hameliness [Familiarity].

A new character, Gude Counsall, next enters, complains that for long he has been "flemit out of Scotland," and deplores the weakness of the King. This is one of the many indications which seem to make the inference irresistible that the character of Rex Humanitas is directly drawn from that of James V. When Gude Counsall has finished his speech, it is the turn of Flattrie, who has just come off a long sea-voyage.

> "Bot now amang yow I will remaine;
> I purpose never to sail againe,
> To put my lyfe in chance of watter.
> Was never sene sic wind and raine,
> Nor of schipmen sic clitter, clatter.
> Sum bade haill! and sum bade standby!
> On steirburd! hoaw! aluiff! fy! fy!
> Quhill all the raipis beguith to rattil.
> Was nevir Roy sa fleyd as I,
> Quhen all the sails playd brittill, brattill."

He is joined by his companions, Falset and Dissait; and the trio conspire to get round the King, by assuming a clerical disguise. Falset and Dissait get themselves up as Clerks newly arrived from France, while Flattrie dons the garb of a Friar.

"A freir?" [exclaims Dissait in surprise]; "quhairto? ye cannot preiche."

"Quhat rak, man?" [comes the prompt reply.] "I can richt weill fleich."

In addition to their borrowed plumes, they take the names

of Discretioun, Sapience, and Devotioun, and go through an extremely daring and blasphemous burlesque of the baptismal service of the Church. The King presently returns, and the vices accost him in their disguise. Sapience unluckily forgets his assumed name, and Dissait jogs his memory.

"*Dissait.* Sapiens, thou servis to beir ane plat.
Methink thow schawis the not weilt wittit.
Falset. Sypeins, sir, Sypeins; marie! now ye hit it.
Flattrie. Sir, gif ye pleis to let him say,
His name is Sapientia.
Falset. That name is it, be Sanct Michell.
Rex. Quhy could thou not tell it thy sell?
Falset. I pray your grace appardoun me,
And I schall schaw the veritie.
I am sa full of Sapience
That sumtyme I will tak ane trance:
My spreit was reft from my bodie,
Now heich abone the Trinitie.
Rex. Sapience suld be ane man of gude.
Falset. Sir, ye may ken that be my hude."

The King finally appoints the three Vices to be his ministers, whereupon they begin to "lay it on thick," one praising his good looks and his dress—"Was never man set sa weill his clais"—and another promising him all the kingdoms of the world. "Sir," says Dissait—

"Sir, I ken be your physnomie
Ye sall conqueir, or else I lie,
Danskin [Dantzic], Denmark, and Almane,
Spittelfeild, and the realme of Spane:
Ye sall have at your governance
Ranfrow and all the realme of France,
Yea Rugland [Rutherglen] and the toun of Rome,
Corstorphine and al Christindome."

The reappearance of Gude Counsall on the scene, looking like a "bairdit bogill," disturbs the Vices, who immediately proceed to "hurl him away," with many murderous threats.

Sensualitie sings a song, after which Veritie enters, carrying a New Testament [1] in her hand, and delivers a species of sermon addressed to judges and priests. Flattrie, Falset, and Dissait approach Spiritualitie [*i.e.*, the Lords Spiritual] with a view to getting Veritie punished, and Spiritualitie grants warrant to Persone and Frier to imprison her. Then follows a fine hymn put into the mouth of Veritie :—

> "Get up, thou sleepis all too lang, O Lord !
> And mak sum ressonabill reformatioun,
> On thame that dois tramp doun thy gracious word,
> And hes ane deidlie indignatioun
> At thame wha maks maist trew narratioun ;
> Suffer me not, Lord, mair to be molest,
> Gude Lord, I mak thee supplicatioun,
> With thy unfriends let me nocht be suppresst."

After thus declaiming, Veritie is clapped into the stocks.

Chastitie is the next virtue introduced by the playwright, and she appeals for recognition and welcome to a Prioress sitting among the spirituality, and pointed out to her by Diligence. But the Prioress is obdurate :—

> "Pas hynd, madame : be Christ, ye come nocht heir !"

Nor is her reception any more kindly from the Lords Spiritual, or the Abbot, or the Parson. She then applies to the Lords Temporal, who advise her to be off, in case their wives hear of her presence. Finally, she makes trial of the burgesses, and thus gives an opening for the Aristophanic

[1] Flattrie is particularly horrified at this—"What buik," he exclaims,

> "What buik is that, harlot, into thy hand ?
> Out ! Walloway ! This is the New Test'ment,
> In Englisch toung, and printit in England !
> Herisie ! Herisie ! fire ! fire ! incontinent."

The "open Bible" was one of Lyndsay's great principles ; and it was sanctioned by an Act of Parliament (1542, c. 12), which allowed the lieges to have "the haly writ in the vulgar toung in Inglis or Scottis of ane gude and trew translation," but excluded the higher, or any other, criticism by the proviso "that na man despute or hald oppunzeonis."

interlude of the Sowtar and the Taylour—one of the most effective, as well as broadly humorous, episodes in the whole drama. The Sowtar and the Taylour are not indisposed to give the lady a friendly enough welcome, and indeed invite her to sit down and drink with them. Quoth the Soutar :—

> "Fill in and play cap out,
> For I am wonder dry :
> The Deuill snyp aff thair snout,
> That haits this company."

Unluckily, their wives get wind of what is afoot, and, having the conventional grievance of the Middle Ages against their respective husbands, proceed forcibly to eject Chastitie, and to "ding" their gudemen. Chastitie, having thus been repulsed by each of the three estates in turn, is brought to the notice of the King ; but she fares no better, and, with his consent, shares the fate of Veritie and is put in the stocks.

The varlet of King Correctioun now makes his entry and announces the approach of his master : news which causes the three Vices serious concern. Flattrie says that he will betake him to Spiritualitie,

> "And preich out throw his dyosie,
> Quhair I will be unknawn;
> Or keip me closse in to sum closter,
> With mony piteous paternoster,
> Till all thir blastis be blawin."

Dissait says that he will go to the Merchants :

> "Ye ken richt few of them that thryfes
> Or can begyll the landwart wyfes
> Bot me, thair man, Dissait."

Falset, for his part, declares that he will find refuge among the Craftsmen. Meanwhile they steal the King's strong-box, quarrel, as might have been expected, over the dividing of the spoil, and make off.

Then arrives Divyne Correctioun, who proclaims his inten-

tion of convening a Parliament of the three Estates, and reforming all abuses. He is welcomed by Gude Counsall, who explains the situation, and the first thing they do is to release Veritie and Chastitie from the stocks. Correctioun then addresses the King, lecturing him gravely on his faults, and summarily dismisses Sensualitie, who is warmly received by the Spiritualitie. The King strikes up an alliance with Correctioun ; Wantounness, Solace, and Placebo are pardoned on promise of amendment for the future ; the trick played by Flattrie, Dissait, and Falset is exposed ; Parliament is summoned ; and an interval for refreshments is proclaimed, marking the conclusion of the First Part of the play.

The Second Part is opened with an Interlude in which Pauper, the poor man, is the chief actor. He seats himself in the King's chair, and, in a spirited dialogue with Diligence, gives an account of his circumstances. He lives in Lothian, not far from Tranent, and has been ruined by the laird's claim for heriot, which meant the loss of his mare, and the vicar's claim for death duties, which ran away with his three cows, to say nothing of the clothes of his deceased father, mother, and wife, which fell as a perquisite to the vicar's clerk. He is now obliged to beg his meat ; he has been excommunicated by the parson for failure to pay teind ; and now he is on his way to seek redress in the law courts ("the more fool you," says Diligence), armed with his last remaining groat to pay the lawyer's fee. Here the Pardoner comes in, and in a long and entertaining harangue explains who and what he is. He too has a strong objection to the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, which bids fair to take the bread out of his mouth.

> "I giue to the deuill with gude intent
> This unsell wickit New Testament,
> With them that it translaittit.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Duill fell the braine that hes it wrocht !
> Sa fall them that the Buik hame brocht !"

He curses Luther, Black Bullinger, and Melancthon with unaffected heartiness, and gives utterance to the following pious aspiration :—

> "Be Him that buir the crowne of thorne !
> I wald Sanct Paull had never bene borne ;
> And, als, I wald his buiks
> War nevir red into the Kirk,
> But amangs freiris into the mirk,
> Or riven amang ruiks."

He then puts down his pack and exhibits his valuable collection of relics, which includes the "richt chaft blade" of Fine Macoull, "with teith and al togidder" ; the horn of Colling's cow, which

> "for eating of Makconnal's corne
> Was slain into Balquhidder ;"

and the self-same cord that hanged Johnnie Armstrong, with which whosoever is hanged needs never to be drowned.

The Pardoner's first customers are the Soutar and his wife, who crave a dispensation from the marriage-tie ; and then follows a scene not indecorous merely, but stupid ; a scene which furnishes an excellent illustration of mediæval "vulgarity without fun," and the like of which undoubtedly help to explain the Puritan's taste for the stage. True humour, however, once more reasserts itself when the Pardoner's servant, Wilkin, describes the arrangements he has made for their suitable accommodation in the village, and for an addition to their stock of relics in the shape of "ane greit hors bane" from "dame Flescher's midding," which his master is to "gar the wyfis trow" is a bone of St. Bride's cow. Pauper now approaches the Pardoner and asks for the restoration of his cows. This the Pardoner refuses, but offers to sell him a pardon for cash down. Pauper hands over his groat, and in return receives a pardon for a thousand years. He is much disgusted with his bargain when he finds that it will do him

no good until he dies and goes to purgatory. He therefore demands his money back with a great deal of appropriate objurgation ; and so by a fight between Pauper and the Pardoner, in which the former prevails and throws all the relics into the water, the Interlude is brought to a termination.

The main thread of the plot is now taken up in the Second Part of the play, the chief interest of which is ecclesiastical and political rather than literary, and which, therefore, does not call for quite so detailed an examination. The three Estates advance to the King, and hold conference with him. John the Common-weill comes forward, on the invitation of Diligence, inveighs against the Estates, and succeeds in getting the three Vices put in the stocks, and Covetice and Sensualitie chased away, in spite of the remonstrances of Spiritualitie. Gude Counsall and John between them set forth the grievances of the nation. Law and order are not maintained ; rents are high and so are teinds ; gentlemen take feus of husbandmen's steadings ; jugglers, jesters, pipers, and fiddlers abound ; and the Justice Eyres are far from being satisfactory in their operation. The shortcomings of the clergy are again dilated upon by John and Pauper, who have a short "flyting" with Spiritualitie and the Parson. Temporalitie proposes and carries measures of reform, such as the abolition of the death duties, Spiritualitie dissenting, and taking instruments in the hands of a notary. John goes on to complain of the amount of money that goes out of the country to the see of Rome on one pretext or another, and suggests that the clergy should be made to do their duty. After "schawing furth his faith" by reciting a metrical version of the Apostles' Creed, he returns to the charge, and enlarges on the abuses of the Consistorial Courts. It is resolved that henceforth Spiritualitie shall have jurisdiction in matters spiritual, and Temporalitie in matters temporal.

Chastitie and Veritie next make *their* complaint at the bar, but it contains little that is novel or striking. Another

grievance is ventilated by Temporalitie, who complains bitterly of the large dowries which wealthy prelates are able to give to their daughters, whereby the "market is raisit sa hie" that landowners have great difficulty in getting their daughters off their hands.[1] Some relief from a topic which threatens to be wearisome is afforded by the entrance of Commoun Thift and Oppression, who also have complaints to bring forward. They view their present surroundings and the projected enforcement of the law with no little consternation ; and Oppressioun, before taking leave of the company, breathes the prayer—

> "Wald God ! I war baith sound and haill
> Now liftit into Liddisdaill
> The Mers sould find me beif and kaill,
> Quhat rak of bread :
> War I thair liftit, with my lyfe,
> The Devill sould stick me with ane knyfe,
> And evir I come againe to Fyfe,
> Quhyll I war dead."

Diligence then brings in three Clerks—one a Doctor of Divinity and the other two Licentiates—who are to superintend the exercise of patronage. Once more we have a recital of the abuses existing in the Church ; to which the only reply of the Churchmen is the plea of "use and wont," and the excuse that, though he can't preach, the parson is a good all-round sportsman. Thereafter the Doctor ascends the pulpit, and delivers a sound evangelical discourse, to the orthodoxy of which the parson and the abbot take exception, only to be refuted by the licentiates. The next step is to strip Flattrie of his friar's robe and the abbess of hers : to "spuilyie" the prelates, and to put their habits on the learned Clerks. John the Common-Weill is

[1] Another great grievance with the lesser gentry apparently was the social pretensions of the clergy. The Nun must be called "Madam," the Priest "Sir," the Monk "Dean," and so forth. See *The Monarchie*, ll. 4658 *et seq.*

also gorgeously apparelled in "ane new habuilyiement" of "sating damais," or of "the velvot fyne." Then Diligence makes formal proclamation of the new Acts of Parliament, which embody all the planks of the Reformers' political and ecclesiastical "platform." Pauper, however, not unnaturally, appears to be a little suspicious whether these Acts will ever be put into execution. Flattrie is sentenced to banishment, and his companions, together with Commoun Thift, are led off to the gallows by the Sergeants, who here, as elsewhere in the play, are quite excellent, and have more than a dash of the true Shakespearean quality. The hanging scene we can imagine to have been immensely popular with the audience, and even for us its grim humour has by no means evaporated. All the culprits make speeches before being "worked off." Commoun Thift takes a spirited farewell of his fellows in crime on the Borders :

> "Adew ! my brethren, common theifis,
> That helpit me in my mischeifis :
> Adew ! Grosars, Nicksons, and Bellis,
> Oft have we run out-thoart the fellis.
> Adew ! Robsons, Hansles, and Pylis,
> That in our craft hes mony wyllis :
> Lytils, Trumbels, and Armestrangs,
> Adew ! all theifis that me belangs ;
> Tailzeours, Eurwings, and Elwands,
> Speidie of fut and wicht of hands ;
> The Scottis of Ewisdaill, and the Graimis,
> I have na tyme to tell your namis.
> With King Correctioun an ye be fangit,
> Beleif richt weill, ye will be hangit."

In the same spirit Dissait takes leave of his friends the Merchants :—

> "Adew ! the greit clan Jamesone,
> The blude royale of Clappertoun,
> I was ay to yow trew :
> Baith Andersone and Patersone,
> Above them all Thome Williamsone,
> My absence ye will rue.

Thome Williamsone, it is your pairt
To pray for me with all your hairt,
And think upon my warks :
How I leirit yow ane gude lessoun,
For to begyle in Edinburgh toun
The Bischop and his Clarks."

Finally, in the longest harangue of all, Falset bids adieu to the Craftsmen :—

"Find me ane wobster that is leill,
Or ane walker that will nocht steill,
Thair craftines I ken :
Or ane millair that is na falt,
That will nather steill meall nor malt ;
Hald them for halie men.
At our fleschers tak ye na greife,
Thocht thay blaw leane mutton and beife,
That they seime fat and fair :
Thay think that practick bot ane mow,
Howbeit, the devill a thing it dow ;
To thame I leirit that lair.

. . . .

Adew ! my maisters, wrichts, and maissouns,
I have neid to leir yow few lessouns,
Ye knaw my craft, perqueir ;
Adew ! blaksmythis and lorimers,
Adew ! ye craftie cordiners,
That sellis the schone ouir deir.
Goldsmythis, fair-weill abuve thame all !
Remember my memoriall,
With mony ane suttill cast :
To mix, set ye nocht by twa preinis,
Fyne ducat gold with hard gudlingis,
Lyke as I leirnit yow last."

They are all "heisit up" in effigy except Falset, whom the stage-direction orders to be hanged in person, while "an Craw or ane Ke" is to be cast up "as it war his saull." Flattrie congratulates himself on escaping the "widdie," and sets out on a pilgrimage to the famous Hermit of Loretto.

We now come to the last Interlude, in which Folie converses with Diligence, tells a long, low-comedy story about a disaster he met with on a midden, feeds Glaikis, his daughter, and Stult his son, and, getting up into the pulpit, preaches a sermon. The whole play concludes with an address by Diligence to the audience, in which he appeals to their indulgence, and admits the possibility that the play has in some parts been tedious—

> "With matter rude, denude of eloquence,
> Likewyse, perchance, to sum men odious,"

an admission which shows Lyndsay's good sense, and which was weli calculated to conciliate those members of the audience who clung to the unreformed doctrine. And so the people are dismissed to their amusements :—

> "Now let ilk man his way avance,
> Let sum ga drink, and sum ga dance :
> Menstrell, blaw up ane brawll of France.
> Let se quha hobbils best :
> For I will rin incontinent
> To the tavern, or evir I stent :
> And pray to God Omnipotent,
> To send yow all gude rest." [1]

The tolerably minute analysis of the *Satyre* which we have just given renders any but the briefest comment on that very remarkable work a superfluity. We may be excused from expatiating on its extraordinary value as a "document" illustrative of the social condition of Scotland at the dawn of the Reformation. Of its purely literary merit—the mastery of metre, of phrase, of vocabulary—the reader has been provided with ample material for judging. The really noteworthy and surprising thing about the piece, as I venture to think, is

[1] Laing prints another and "preliminary" interlude, "The Auld Man and his Wyfe," of which it is unnecessary to give any particulars.

its dramatic quality. It proves Lyndsay to have possessed the playwright's instinct, and the secret of stage-effect, in no ordinary measure. He never made a secret of the fact that he wrote for the commonalty [1]; and we can picture to ourselves the enthusiasm and delight with which the most telling scenes and speeches in the *Satyre* would be received by an audience drawn from the ranks of a people never averse from subjecting their rulers to the wholesome test of ridicule. That, from our point of view, there is too much declamation and "speechifying" in the play is true enough; but, due allowance being made for a fault inevitably springing from the didactic purpose of the author, it requires no abnormal keenness of vision to perceive the dramatic propriety of much of the action and the dramatic vividness with which the characters are presented. The personages masquerading under the guise of abstract qualities are for the most part flesh and blood, and the touch of exaggeration which enters into their presentment serves but to keep them human. In "Sandie" Solace, we have one of those happy strokes which transport us from the region of acted allegory to that of drama proper; and if Sensualitie, Wantounness, and Flattrie, and all the rest of the Vices (for the Virtues are somewhat less convincing) are men and women, still more emphatically so are the Taylour and the Sowtar, with their wives, Pauper, the Pardoner, and the Serjeants.

In literature, as in politics, it may be that the "might-have-beens" are illegitimate, as they are futile. But to wonder how the course of Scottish drama might have run if the external conditions had been analogous to those that prevailed in England is certainly a tempting, and perhaps after all an innocent, speculation. That these conditions were, unhappily,

[1] "Quharefore to colzearis, cairtaris, and to cukis,
To Jok and Thome my rhyme sall be directit,
With cunyngmen quhowbeit it wylbe lackit."
The Monarchie, ll. 549-551.

very different in the two countries is well known. The Reformation in England helped to pave the way for the Elizabethan drama. In Scotland it was hostile to almost every form of art, and fatal to that which finds its home on the stage. The old sports and pastimes of the people were suppressed with a heavy hand. "Robert Hude," Lyttil Johne, the Abbot of Unreason, and the Quene of the May, were ostracised both in burgh and to landward.[1] For well-nigh a hundred and fifty years the desolating influence of a gloomy and intolerant fanaticism brooded over the country; and, while it permanently deprived the people of forms of amusement which might have developed something really worth developing, it did little to abate the national appetite for drink and fornication. If we may judge by Lyndsay's *Satyre*, no nation could have showed a fairer promise of playing a worthy part in the dramatic revival which is the glory of English literature at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. But *dis aliter visum;* that promise was irretrievably blasted, and our only consolation must be that 'twas so written in the book of Fate. In *Philotus* (*infra*, p. 226), we have a not very favourable sample of Scottish comedy dating from early in the seventeenth century; and we know that the practice of performing Latin and other plays lingered in the grammar schools for a hundred and fifty years longer.[2] But now, almost the only remaining vestige of the Scottish vernacular and popular drama is to be found in the boys who

[1] Act 1555, c. 40 (61). *Cf.* Alexander Scott's lines:—

> "In May when men yeid everich one
> With Robene Hoid and Littill Johne,
> To bring in bowis and birkin bobbins;
> Now all sic game is fastlingis gone,
> Bot gyf it be amangis clovin Robbyns."
>
> *Of May*, ll. 16–20.

[2] Graham, *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed., 1901, p. 439.

beg from house to house at Christmas time under the pretence of being "guisards." [1]

[1] For an interesting account of the Guisards as they used to be and of the plays they used to act, within living memory, see the *Scotsman*, 31st December, 1902, art. "The Dying Guisard." Before finally parting from Lyndsay, it may be proper to advert to the list of poets which he gives in the Prologue to the *Papyngo*. That list contains the following names (in addition to others, which have been, or are about to be, dealt with in the text), viz., Sir James Inglis, Kyd, Stewarte, Stewart of Lorn, Galbraith, and Kynlouch. These poets, of whom little or nothing is otherwise known, have attributed to them in the various Manuscript collections certain pieces, not one of which is above the level of mediocrity. The reader who desires to sample their not very attractive wares may be referred to Mr. Henderson's *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, pp. 238 *et seq.*

CHAPTER III

EARLY PROSE, AND THE PROSE OF THE REFORMATION

THAT literary prose is of later growth than literary verse is a fact to which the literatures of the world bear almost unanimous testimony. Scotland was so far from being an exception to the general rule in this respect that nowhere is the phenomenon more obvious. Many theories have been, and may be, advanced to account for this ; but none appear to be wholly satisfactory. We must be content to see how the matter stands without seeking a solution of what, after all, is perhaps no very important mystery.

The want of a vernacular prose, we may assume, was little felt ; but it was supplied, in the case of the very limited literate class, by Latin of a somewhat doubtful order. John Fordun (d. *circ.* 1385) is perhaps the earliest of the Scots scribes who found utterance in a decidedly unattractive, if not positively forbidding, variety of that language. His *Scotichronicon*,[1] which was continued by Walter Bower, Abbot of Inchcolm (d. 1449), has little grace or charm of style, but it is remarkable as the first attempt to "digest into chronological order" the fables which, so digested, were for long accepted as an integral part of Scottish history. Indeed, the work is declared by Mr.

[1] Ed. Skene, 2 vols., Edin., 1871–72.

Skene to "form the indispensable groundwork of our annals," in so far as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are concerned. No less fantastic and prone to belief was Hector Boece or Boyce (1465–1536), the principal of King's College, Aberdeen. His falsehoods have been compared, in a well-known epigram, to the waves of the sea or the stars for number. But his Latinity was infinitely superior to Fordun's, as was becoming in a friend of Erasmus, and he has been pronounced by Irving, not unjustly, to be "the first Scottish Author who wrote in the Latin language with any considerable degree of elegance."[1] His *Scotorum Historiæ*, which appeared in 1527, at once became an attractive object to translators;[2] but it is, perhaps, allowable to award the preference to his *Lives of the Bishops of Mortlach and Aberdeen*[3] (1522), which displays his talents to high advantage. His account of the excellent Bishop Elphinstone leaves an extremely pleasing impression of his literary powers and his command of Latin.

A man of much heavier metal than either Fordun or Boece was John Major, or Mair, who was born near North Berwick in 1469. He received his education at Cambridge and Paris, where he acquired an immense reputation as a lecturer at the Montaigu College. In later years he taught in the University of Glasgow, where Knox was numbered among his pupils, and afterwards at St. Andrews, where he was appointed Provost of St. Salvator's College in 1533. He died in 1550.

To say that Major was one of the greatest, as he was one of the last, of the Schoolmen, is probably to damn him in the eyes of those to whom the word "mediæval" with all its associations is as a red rag to a bull. George Buchanan, who had sat under him in Paris, regarded his teacher as what we should call an "old fogey," hopelessly out of date and

[1] *Lives of Scotish Writers*, vol. i. p. 1.

[2] Besides Bellenden's version in prose, a Scots metrical version of it, appeared in 1535 from the pen of William Stewart (ed. Turnbull, 3 vols., 1858).

[3] Bannatyne Club, 1825; tr. Moir, New Spalding Club, 1894.

behind the times; and the epigram in which he expressed this contempt for his old master is one of his most celebrated compositions. But, in plain truth, Major's case supplies a most salutary and much-needed warning against drawing a hard-and-fast line between the dusk of the Middle Ages and the splendour of the Renaissance; between the Schoolman on the one side as the representative of darkness, and the Humanist on the other as the apostle of light. It may safely be asserted that Major has at least as much in common with modern modes of thought as Buchanan. Pedantry was no monopoly of the Scholastic way of thinking; and Buchanan was every whit as much the slave of convention as Major. When we turn to the latter's *Historia Majoris Britanniæ* [1] (1521), we find a writer who is sceptical rather than confiding; a man of moderate and enlightened views; and, essentially, a seeker after truth. To say, on the other hand, that Buchanan, the historian, is a rabid and credulous partisan is to express a fact in the mildest possible manner. It is true that Major's Latin is crabbed and uninviting. He wrote, as Archbishop Spottiswoode says, in "a *sorbonick* and barbarous style," yet (the quotation may be pursued) "very truly and with a great liberty of spirit." Major took broad and calm views of matters of state, though his history was written at a time when faction ran high. He was not ashamed or afraid to express opinions with regard to the relations between monarchs and their subjects, which are decidedly "constitutional" in complexion; and he was a convinced and convincing advocate of the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland.[2]

The earliest Scottish vernacular prose which has come down

[1] Tr. and ed. Constable for the S. H. S., 1891. In addition to an admirable introduction by the editor, this edition contains a biographical sketch of Major by Mr. Aeneas Mackay, and a full bibliography by Mr. T. G. Law.

[2] For instances of Major's habitual fairness to England, see Constable's introduction *ut sup.*, p. xxii. Mr. Mackay has some excellent observations on the relations between Buchanan and Major in his biography, p. lxxiv.

to us appears to be contained in certain letters and in the Statute-book. A collection of statutes is not the place in which a sane man would nowadays hunt for models of style, nor are the early Scots Acts remarkable for grace or polish. Yet it must be remembered that in the early part of the fifteenth century (and we can go no further back with any certainty) the vocabulary and diction of the law had not become highly specialised, and the legislator was often able to express himself with a force and a directness which his modern successor, living in a more complicated state of society, is unable to rival. The following short specimens may help to convey some idea of what the old statutes are like:—

Act 1424, May 26, c. 25 (12mo ed. c. 24).

"It is ordained that in all burrow townes of the realme and throuchfaires, quhair commoun passages are, that their be ordained hostillares and receipters, havand stables and chalmers. And that men find with them bread and aile, and all uther fude, alsweill to horse as men, for reasonable price, after the chaipes of the country."

Act 1424, March 12, c. 24 (12mo ed. c. 45).

". . . . Gif there bee onie pure creature, for faulte of cunning or dispenses, that cannot or may not follow his cause, the King for the love of God sall ordaine the judge before quhom the cause suld be determined to purwey and get a leill and a wise Advocate to follow sic pure creatures causes: And gif sik causes be obteined, the wranger sal assyith baith the partie skaithed and the Advocatis coastes and travel. And gif the judge refusis to do the law eavenlie, as is before said, the partie compleinand sall have recourse to the King, quha sall see rigorouslie punished sik judges, that it sall be exemple till all uthers."

Act 1449, c. 6 (12mo ed. c. 18).

"It is ordained for the safetie and favour of the pure pepil that labouris the ground, that they and all utheris that hes takin or shall take landes in time to come fra lordes and hes termes and zeires thereof, that suppose tha lordis sell or annaly [alienate] that land or landes: the takers sall remaine with their tackes [leases] unto the ischew of their termes, quhais handes

that evir thay landes cum to, for siklike maill [rent] as they tooke them for." [1]

A short tract or pamphlet called *The Craft of Deyng* [2] is confidently attributed by experts to the fifteenth century, though its precise period is not ascertained.[3] The little work is of a strongly moral cast; and, though it may not be of surpassing merit, some passages, like the concluding sentences which we here quote, are not without a fine feeling and worthy expression of their own :—

"He suld als forgyf al kynd of man, of all actione hartfully, and ask forgyvnes of God and man; For as he forgewys he sall be forgewyne. Als he suld mak satisfactione of all he has tane wrangwsly, or at he aw; efter his poware suld he sell all his gudys, mouable and unmouable, and he may haf laisare thar-to. And quhat euer he be that treuly kepys this informacioune but fenzeing, he beis saint. At our thire thingis, ilk man in the houre of ded suld do, efter his poware, as Cryst dyd one the cros : fyrst he prayd, and swa suld we; syne criyd efter help, and sua suld we, with the hart, gyf we mycht nocht with the moucht; and syne he yauld [yielded] his saull to

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[1] I have followed the comparatively modernised spelling of the 12mo, for the sake of greater intelligibility. But unquestionably some of the aroma has evaporated in consequence.

[2] Printed in the E. E. T. S. ed. of *Ratis Raving*, 1870, which also contains a summary of the teaching of *Ecclesiastes*, entitled *The Wisdom of Solomon*.

[3] The following may be noted as among the differences between the Early and the Middle Scots, to which Dr. Murray has drawn attention (see *Ratis Raving*, E. E. T. S., Introduction, p. x.): In the early Scots, the simple vowel, in the Middle Scots a double vowel, is used to express the same sound; *e.g.*, *mar* becomes *mair*, *de* becomes *dey*, *her* becomes *heir*, *thole* becomes *thoil*. The rule as to the indefinite article is the same in Early Scots as in Northern (and indeed modern) English. In Middle Scots, *ane* is invariably used before a consonant as well as before a vowel. *At* is used for the relative pronoun in Early Scots. In Middle Scots it is replaced by *quhilk* and *quhilkis*. (The use of *quha* for the relative, says Dr. Murray, is unknown before 1540.) See also on this subject Mr. Gregory Smith's learned introduction to his invaluable *Specimens of Middle Scots*, Edin., 1902, where the whole question of the characteristics and origin of that dialect is exhaustively discussed.

his father, and sua suld we, gladly gyfand hyme, sayand thris, gyf he mycht, and gyf he mycht nocht, sum uthir for hime, 'In manus tuas domine, commendo spiritum meum, domine, deus veritatis'; and he suld resaue thankfully the pane of ded, in satisfactione of all his mysdedis, as God grant ws al to do, for his mekill mercy. Amen."[1]

But the most important early Scots prose work is that of Sir Gilbert, of the Haye,[2] the date of which is 1456. It consists of a translation of three works, contained in a manuscript in the Abbotsford collection. These three works are the *Arbre des Batailles* of Honoré Bonet; *L'Ordre de Chevalerie*; and *Le Governement des Princes*. The translation of the first has been published by the Scottish Text Society[3] under the title of *The Buke of the Law of Armys, or Buke of Battaillis*, and, while the author wavers between the early and middle stages of his native dialect, and to some extent its learned editor finds that to assign to the work "a definite linguistic place" is not very easy, its length and continuity lend it a singular interest. It is unnecessary to analyse thè contents of what, after all, is but a faithful translation. It must suffice to note that it deals, as it bears to do, with the law of arms in all its branches, and that, though there is at times a great deal too much of hair-splitting (Part IV. is all casuistry from beginning to end), there is often perceptible a vein of sound good sense, as, for example, in the objections urged against trial by battle.[4] The first passage we present traces the growth of the administration of justice in primitive communities :—

"Bot fra the lignee of Adam multiplyit in grete people, quhen ane did ane othir injure, the fader aye did resoun and chastisit his sone; for it efferis to the fader to chastis his barnis; and to the barnis it efferis to be subjectis and obeysand to the faderis. Syne efter this,

[1] From *The Craft of Deyng*, E. E. T. S., p. 8.

[2] To Haye is also attributed a metrical translation from the French, in 20,000 lines, called *The Buik of Alexander the Conqueror*.

[3] Ed. J. H. Stevenson, Edin., 1901.

[4] Part iii. ch. i.

the fader began to be juge of his awin sone. Bot for sum tyme it hapnis in erde that the barnis ar nocht of gude teching na will nocht tak with the doctryne of the faderis, na wald nouther tak teching na chastisement of the fader. And alssua sum faderis ar sa pitous and wayke spiritit that thay coud nocht fynd in thair hertis to dyng na chasty thair barnis, quhilk norist thair barnis ay the mare in vicis, quhen thai saw thai war sparit and favourit of thair faderis that mycht nocht fynd in thair hertis to punys thame efter thair desertis as justice requiris. For few is thair faderis that, and thair barne had slayn ane othir wyfis barne, wald put thair awin barne to dede tharefore. And be this caus, quhen the peple persavit that the faderis wald do na resoun, na justice of thair barnis, na that the barnis quhen thai come till elde wald thole na correctioun of the faderis, resoun gave the folk in thair hertis to mak a soverane, the quhilk suld have na pitee to do law and resoun, and to justify every man efter his desertis, and the quhilk had power to do justice apon bathe grete rebellouris and misdoaris as apon the smallis, and that mycht sustene the fede of thame quhen he had done."[1]

The second explains the origin of war :—

"And as langand the secounde questioune, that is to say, quhare was bataill first fundyn. To the quhilk question I ansuere thus, that it was fundyn in hevin. And in this maner, first quhen the grete God, fader of hevin, maid the angelis, he maid ane sa faire and sa glorious that throu the grete beautee of him he passit all the angelis and other creaturis that evir God maid in beautee, and tharfore was he callit Lucifer, quasi ferens lucem ; the quhilk for his grete beautee schynit sa before all others under him as dois a grete torch be a small littill candill, that the schyning of the licht that come fra him disteynyeid all the lave in clereness of schyning that thai semyt all dym in the regarde of him. The quhilk, quhen he sawe himself sa faire, sa noble, and sa relusand before all the lave, he miskend himself, and forgett quha had gevin him that grete beautee and fairnes ; thocht in himself he had na pere in hevyn bot God himself it war, and said that he suld ascend in the hyest stage of hevin, and thare in the north partis he suld sett his sege, and suld be like to the hiest God. And with him was consentit to his acorde grete nombir. And alsa sone as he had maid this enterpris and his anerdaris was consentit and maid thame tharefore, oure Lord God Almychty quhilk kend his thocht, and his purpos, ordanyt the bataill aganis

[1] *The Buke of the Law of Armys*, part ii. ch. xviii. Ed. S. T. S., p. 68.

him and his complicis, send Michael his angel with sik a power of gude angelis that was nocht of thair partye, and gafe him bataill and discomfyte him and all his anerdancis, and gert thame wend doun wter the waye till hell, quhare he is yit principale inymy till all mankynde, and adversare till all thame that God lufis, as is recountit be Sanct Gregore, the haly doctour, in his buke of his moralitis. Quharefore it suld nocht be grete mervaillis to se grete weris and bataillis in this warld here, sen bataill was first maid aganis God himself in hevin." [1]

When we have mentioned the works of John of Ireland, one of which—apparently an original piece of hortatory social philosophy—has descended to us,[2] we have exhausted the tale of all that is worth noticing in the native prose of the fifteenth century. The sixteenth, which opened so brilliantly as regards poetry, did little or nothing in the way of original prose for a good many years, and the process of adapting the vernacular to that form of composition was carried on through the medium of translations. Towards the close of the second decade (it is believed) of the new century, there was composed by Murdoch Nisbet a Scots version of Wyclif's *New Testament*,[3] practically the only essay of the sort which runs counter to the steady Anglicising influence of the versions of Holy Scripture upon which the Scottish Reformers based their teaching. The philological value of this work, as may be naturally supposed, is considerable; for we are able to set clearly side by side and compare the idiom and vocabulary of the Northern and Southern portions of the island. The differences which such a comparison discloses are matter rather for the expert than for the general student, and need not be set forth in detail;[4] but the following rendering of a

[1] *The Buke of the Law of Armys*, part i. ch. ii. Ed. S. T. S., p. 6.

[2] See Mr. Stevenson *apud* Haye, *ut sup.*, p. lvi. See also Mr. Gregory Smith, *Specimens, ut sup.*, p. 92.

[3] Ed. Law, S. T. S., 1901. The MS. came through the Ayrshire Lollard and Covenanting family of its writer into the Auchinleck collection, whence it passed into the possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney.

[4] They are fully handled by Mr. Law in his ed. *ut sup.* pp. xx. *et seq.*, and in *Chambers's Cyclopædia of Literature*, vol. i. p. 213.

sufficiently familiar passage may be acceptable as indicating some of the distinctive features of the Scots version :—

"And Zacharie his fadere was fulfillit with the Haligaast, and propheciet, and said, Blessit be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visitit and made redemptioun of his pepile, and he has raasit to us a horn of heill in the hous of Dauid his childe. As he spak be the mouthe of his haly prophetis that ware fra the warld : Heill fra oure ennimyis and fra the hand of almen that hatit us ; to do mercy with oure fadris, and to have mynd of his halie testament ; in the gret aath that he suore to Abraham oure fadere, to gefe himself to us, that we without dreed, delyuerit fra the hand of oure ennimyis, serve to him, in halynes and richtwisnes before him, in al oure dais. And thou, child, salbe callit the prophet of the hieast : For thou sall ga before the face of the Lord to mak reddy his wayis ; to geve science of heil to his pepile, into remissioun of thare synnis, be the inwartnes of the mercy of our God ; in quhilkis he, rysing up fra on hie, has visitit us, to geve licht to thame that sittis in mirknessis and in schadou of deid, to dresse our feet in the way of pece." [1]

John Bellenden, or Ballantyne, Archdeacon of Moray, who was born about 1495, and who died at some date unknown between 1550 and 1587, is celebrated for two excellent translations, one of the first five books of Livy [2] (1532), the other of Boece's *Historia* (1536).[3] He was also something of a poet, as is testified by the rhymed *Proloug* to his Livy, by his metrical "prohemes," and by a reference in Lyndsay to—

> "Ane cunnyng Clark quhilk wrytith craftelie
> Ane plant of poetis callit Ballendyne,
> Quhose ornat workis my wit can nocht defyne." [4]

Whatever the character of his poetry, "ornate" is not an epithet properly applicable to Bellenden's prose, which is essentially of the straightforward and plain-sailing kind. He and Pitscottie (*infra* p. 157), indeed, may be considered as

[1] Luke i. 67.
[2] Edin., 1822 ; ed. Craigie, S. T. S., vol. i., Edin., 1901.
[3] Ed. Maitland, 2 vols., Edin., 1821.
[4] Prologue to the *Papyngo*, ll. 50–52.

typical exponents of classical Middle Scots prose, which we shall illustrate by preference from the original writer and not from the translator, though it must be observed that there are passages interpolated in the *Croniklis* (as his rendering of Boece is called) which raise Bellenden to the higher status. In their capable hands it proves itself an instrument admirably fitted for certain purposes, but curiously inferior in tone and compass to the same language when applied to poetry.

Down to a not far distant point of time it might have been affirmed without hesitation that by far the most interesting of early original prose writings in the Scots tongue was *The Complaynt of Scotland*,[1] printed and published, apparently in Paris, in 1549. It has now, however, been ascertained that the attribute of originality can no longer be allowed to this work, which turns out to be an adaptation, if not a translation, from *Le Quadrilogue Invectif* of Alain Chartier, while the unknown writer is also indebted to Saint Gelais, Bishop of Angoulême, the author of a version of Ovid's *Epistles*.[2] This discovery no doubt detracts to some extent from the merit and value of the piece ; yet *The Complaynt* presents so many features of interest and curiosity that it seems worth a somewhat detailed examination. It should be premised that the authorship is still involved in obscurity. It has been attributed, but without any good ground, to Sir James Inglis, to one of the Wedderburns, and to Sir David Lyndsay. All that we can be pretty sure of is that it was composed in France, and that the author was a devoted supporter of the House of Guise, and of the French alliance.[3] Whether he was in literature "a mere

[1] Ed. Leyden, 1801 ; ed Murray, E. E. T. S., 1872.

[2] See W. A. Neilson, in the *Journal of Germanic Philology*, No. 4 ; and Craigie, in the *Modern Quarterly of Language and Literature*, April, 1899, p. 267.

[3] Certain *nuances* of language and spelling enable Dr. Murray to conjecture with tolerable confidence that he was a South-country Scot from the Border counties.

amateur," as Mr. Craigie holds, we shall be in a better position to determine presently.

The keynote of the style of much of the book is struck with no faltering touch in the dedication to the Queen Dowager.

"The immortal gloir that procedis be the rycht lyne of vertu, fra your magnanime avansing of the public veil [weal] of the affligit realme of Scotland, is abundantly dilatit, athort al cuntreis; throucht the quhilk the precius germe of your nobilite bringis nocht furtht alanerly [only] branchis and tendir leyvis of vertu; but als veil it bringis furtht salutiferre and hoilsum frute of honour, quhilk is ane immortal and supernatural medicyne, to cure and to gar convallesse all the langorius, desolat, and affligit pepil, quhilkis ar al mast disparit of mennis supple [supply=help], and reddy to be venquest and to be cum randrit in the subjection and captivité of our mortal ald enemeis, be rason that ther cruel invasions aperis to be onremedabil."[1]

We are at no loss to recognise the style. Here plainly is "aureate" and ornate prose, modelled upon the "aureate" and ornate poetry of which we have seen so much. There is here abundance of stuff (such, for example, as the word "salutiferre") which would have commended itself to Polonius as emphatically "good." And the antiquated effect is kept up when we find the Queen's "heroyque vertu" praised above that of Valeria, Cloelia, Lucretia, Penelope, Cornelia, Semiramis (not, if all tales are true, an exemplar of virtue of the *un*heroic stamp), Thomaris, Penthesilea, "or of ony uthir verteouse lady that Plutarque or Bocchas [Boccacio] hes discrivit." We may note parenthetically that even at this early stage the writer's hatred of those "deceitful wolves," the English, is already made apparent.

In the prologue to the Redar, which follows, he endeavours to conciliate the favour of that patron by promising him a very different kind of fare from that which he has hitherto set

[1] Ed. Murray, *ut sup*, p. 1.

before him. Everything is to be popular and easily intelligible.

"Nou heir I exort al philosophouris historiographouris and oratouris of our Scottis natione to support and til excuse my barbir agrest termis; for I thocht it not necessair til haf fardit and lardit this tracteit with exquisite termis, quhilkis ar nocht daly usit, bot rather I hef usit domestic Scottis langage, maist intelligibil for the vlgare pepil." [1]

The trick of using long words, he assures us, is simply the result of "fantastiknes ande glorius consaitis." Yet he owns that he has been obliged here and there to use a Latin expression.

"Ther for it is necessair at sum tyme til myxt oure langage vitht part of termis drewyn fra Lateen, be rason that oure Scottis tong is nocht sa copeus as is the Lateen tong, and alse ther is diverse purposis and propositions that occurris in the Lating tong that can nocht be translaitit deuly in oure Scottis langage." [2]

It will be remembered that, in the prologue to his *Aeneid*, Douglas gives a similar undertaking, which he carries out in a similar manner. Nothing is more noticeable in *The Complaynt* than the free use of Latinisms and more especially of Gallicisms; and the reader who trusted to the assurances given in the prologue would have his confidence rudely shattered when he found, for example, the Creator described as "the supreme plasmator of havyn and eird."

The first part of *The Complaynt* consists of variations upon two apparently inexhaustible themes, the mutations of monarchies, and the approaching end of the world. These topics are enlivened by no great novelty of treatment, and it is a relief when they are put aside for something else. The author announces that, fatigued (as he well might be) with his previous exertions, and reluctant to indulge in the bad

[1] Ed. Murray, *ut sup.* p. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

habit of sleeping at odd hours, which induces "caterris, hede verkis, and indegestione," he walked forth on a summer evening; and he then proceeds to open a long "Monolog recreative," recounting what he saw in the course of his walk, of which hereafter.

The main thread of his discourse is taken up again, when the "Monolog" is over, and we have the inevitable dream of the mediæval allegorist. A lady with a woful countenance and in great distress—no other, in fact, than Dame Scotia—appears to him, and bitterly reproaches her three sons (*videlicet*, the three Estates) with their undutiful conduct. She surveys history to prove the possibility of a tyrant being overthrown, and urges that they should co-operate loyally in throwing off the English yoke, which the battle of Pinkie in 1547 had fastened upon the neck of the Scots. The English case against Scottish independence is next demolished, with historical illustrations, and the alleged prophecy of Merlin demonstrated to be fallacious, or at all events susceptible of a very different construction from that favoured by the English. The conclusion arrived at with respect to the expediency of an English alliance is set forth in perfectly unambiguous terms:—

"There is nocht tua nations undir the firmament that ar mair contrar and different fra uthirs nor is Inglis men and Scottis men, quhoubeit that they be vitht in ane ile, and nychtbours, and of ane langage. For Inglis men are subtil, and Scottis men are facile. Inglis men ar ambitius in prosperite, and Scottis men are humain in prosperite. Inglis men ar humil quhen thai ar subjeckit be forse and violence, and Scottis men ar furious quhen thai ar violently subjeckit. Inglis men ar cruel quhene thai get victorie, and Scottis men ar merciful quhen thai get victorie. And to conclude, it is onpossibil that Scottis men and Inglis men can remane in concord undir ane monarch or ane prince, because there naturis and conditions ar as indifferent as is the nature of scheip and volvis."[1]

[1] Ed. Murray, *ut sup.* p. 106.

This curious passage certainly says very little for the unknown author's powers either of observation or of prophecy. It is probably unique in the attribution to the Scots of "facility." But, not to discuss his somewhat startling statements one by one, we may dispose of them by remarking that they illustrate one of his chief foibles: an untempered vehemence, a contempt of moderation, in his hostility to the "auld enemy," which by no means conduces to effectiveness, and which, however creditable to the patriot, is scarcely worthy of the man of letters.[1]

The Complaynt then goes on to inveigh against the treachery of many Scots, and all conspirators and traitors are solemnly warned of the bad end in store for them. Even the princes whom they serve always punish such persons in the long run; and this proposition, too, is proved by instances gathered from history. In response to this appeal for a closing up of all ranks in the community, Labour, Scotia's third, and by his own account disinherited, son makes a piteous complaint of his evil case. He is truly, he declares, the eldest of the brothers. "The pollicé that vas inventit be me and my predecessouris eftir the creatione of the varld hes procreat the stait of my brethir. The faculteis and the begynnyng of nobillis and spiritualité hed bot pure lauboraris to there predecessouris." Blue blood is all nonsense. "I trou that gif ane cirurgyen vald drau part of there blude in ane bassyn, it vald haf na bettir cullour nor the blude of ane plebien or of ane mecanik craftis man." In short, Labour goes through the whole string of democratic commonplaces, and fortifies them by illustrations from ancient history.

[1] There is this to be said further for the writer, that ever since the affair of Solway Moss, English intrigue had been exceptionally busy in Scotland, and the press, among other more powerful engines, had been used for what it was worth to promote the interests of England. Such *brochures* as the *Exhortacion to the Scottes* (London, 1547) of one James Harryson, a *soi disant* Scot, were little likely to disarm the hostility of one who justly suspected the *dona Danaorum*.

His address, upon the whole, is vigorous and forcible, in spite of this characteristic piece of pedantry ; but his mother, Scotia, declines to accept him or any man as a witness in his own cause (wherein, until comparatively recently, the Scottish tribunals followed her example). She furthermore tells him roundly of all his faults, and these are precisely the faults which always have been attacked by the holders of *anti*-democratic opinions. The distressful lady next turns her attention to the members of the nobility, with whom she is equally plain-spoken. She reminds them that mere birth is no title to admiration or applause, and she taxes them specifically with gross extravagance in their mode of living. Their money all goes in field-sports instead of in the proper maintenance of their establishments. "Ane man is nocht reput for ane gentil man in Scotland bot gyf he mak mair expensis on his horse and his doggis nor he dois on his vyfe and bayrnis." Lastly, Scotia lectures the clergy on their misdeeds,[1] and winds up the piece by exhorting her three sons to sink their differences and present a united front to the common enemy.

We must now revert to the Monologue—decidedly the most interesting and attractive portion of the whole work, but probably an interpolation or afterthought, and quite irrelevant to the main argument.

It opens, as we have already noted, with an account of the author sallying forth for a stroll on a summer evening. There is a highly pedantic description of a sunset, and from the minute particulars stated as to the position of the setting orb in the heavens, the author is enabled to fix the day of the month —it is the 6th of June. Though the interlude starts with a sunset, the night passes, and makes room for the orthodox sunrise. This gives an opening for an extraordinary passage, in

[1] It has been ingeniously surmised from the manner of this particular harangue, which certainly is mainly concerned with somewhat vague generalities, that the author of *The Complaynt* was himself a priest. There is no other evidence on the matter.

which are enumerated many beasts and birds ; and the noises which they make are more or less faithfully reproduced by the aid of rhyme, assonance, and alliteration.

"Nou to tel treutht of the beystis that maid sic beir, and of the dyn that the foulis did, ther syndry soundis hed nothir temperance nor tune. For fyrst furtht on the fresche feildis, the nolt maid noyis vitht mony loud lou. Baytht horse & meyris did fast nee, and the folis nechyr. The bullis began to bullir, quhen the scheip began to blait, be cause the calfis began tyl mo, quhen the doggis berkit. Than the suyne began to quhryne quhen thai herd the asse rair quhilk gart the hennis kekkyl quhen the cokis creu. The chekyns began to peu quhen the gled quhissillit. The fox followit the fed geise, and gart them cry claik. The gayslingis cryit quhilk, quhilk, and the dukis cryit quaik. The ropeen of the rauynis gart the crans crope, the huddit crauis cryit varrok, varrok, quhen the suannis murnit, because the gray goul mau pronosticat ane storme. The turtil began for to greit, quhen the cuschet youlit. The titlene followit the goilk, ande gart hyr sing guk, guk. The dou croutit hyr sad sang that soundit lyik sorrou. Robeen and the litil vran var hamely in vyntir. The iargolyne of the suallou gart the iay iangil. Than the maueis maid myrtht, for to mok the merle. The lauerok maid melody up hie in the skyis. The nychtingal al the nycht sang sueit notis. The tuechitis cryit theuis nek, quhen the piettis clattrit. The garruling of the stirlene gart the sparrou cheip. The lyntquhit sang cuntirpoint quhen the osyil yelpit. The grene serene sang sueit, quhen the gold spynk chantit. The rede schank cryit my fut my fut, and the oxee cryit tueit. The herrons gaif ane vyild skreech as the kyl had bene in fyir, quhilk gart the quhapis for fleyitnes fle far fra hame."[1]

The scene next changes to the sea-side, where we catch sight of a galliass, and see her sailors at work, and hear their peculiar cries, which as rendered are now mainly unintelligible. A spirited sea-fight follows, and here again every artifice from alliteration to onomatopœia is employed to give vivacity and *vraisemblance* to the picture.

From the shore, the author turns his steps inland, and falls in with a company of shepherds engaged in eating their breakfast.

[1] *The Complaynt of Scotland*, ed. Murray, p. 38.

This rustic scene is charmingly described, but unluckily the chief shepherd has at least one fault characteristic of a more sophisticated class of society, and, in effect, proves to be extremely long-winded. He begins his discourse by expatiating on the advantages of a pastoral existence, and brings forward the well-known instances of Amphion, King David, Apollo, Cincinnatus, Cato, and others, to bear out his contention. He dwells upon the corruption of towns with an unction which a Haller, a Mirabeau, or a Jean-Jacques, could scarcely surpass, and then enters upon a prolonged exposition of the principles of astronomy and natural philosophy, which, he observes, were "first prettickit and doctrinet be us that ar scheiphirdis."

But all things come to an end, and even the shepherd is, at length, pulled up by an unsympathetic and unappreciative wife.

"My veil belouit hisband," says she, with true connubial candour, "I pray the to decist fra that tideus melancolic orison, quhilk surpassis thy ingyne, be rason that it is nocht thy facultee to disput in ane profund mater, the quhilk thy capacite can nocht comprehend. Ther for, I thynk it best that ve recreat our selfis vytht joyus comonying quhil on to the tyme that ve return to the scheip fald vith our flokkis. And to begyn sic recreatione, I thynk it best that euyrie ane of us tel ane gude tayl or fabil to pas the tyme quhil ewyn."[1]

It is not surprising that this proposal is carried *nem. con.* by the assembled shepherds, with their wives and servants. The tales they told, the songs they sang, and the dances they danced are duly catalogued, and these lists (which will be found *infra*, p. 221) are of high value from the point of view of the student of folk-lore and of folk-song. All the performers, of course, acquit themselves superlatively well. "The foure marmadyns that sang quhen Thetis vas mareit on month Pillion, sang nocht as sueit as did thir scheiphyrdis," who surpassed them "in melodius music, in gude accorddis and reportis of dyapason, prolations, and dyatesseron"; while, as

[1] Ed. Murray, p. 62.

for the dancing, the shepherds kept more "geomatrial measure" than Euripides, Juvenal, Perseus, Horace, or any of the satiric poets ever did. These diversions at an end, the shepherds go home, and their sheep with them.

This leaves the author free to enter a meadow. Now, where you have a meadow, you have flowers and herbs, and where you have flowers and herbs, you must make a catalogue of them. This catalogue is duly presented to us; after which, the author falls into the slumber during which he beholds the vision that leads to the original purpose of the work being resumed.

Such, then, is *The Complaynt*, and such the "Monolog recreative": a truly extraordinary blend of sense and nonsense, of humour and pedantry, of fancy and fatuity, of adherence to a dying convention and the ambition to strike out a new one. It would be a simpler matter to pronounce a definite judgment upon the author if we were able to trace with certainty the literary pedigree of the "Monolog." Throughout it suggests the suspicion that it was borrowed, but whence, no one can tell or, at least, has yet told; and while we may legitimately guess that the writer had read his Rabelais, it may frankly be owned that, if the dates only permitted, we should be even more confident that he had read his Urquhart. Meanwhile, thus much perhaps we may venture to say that he was a literary adventurer rather than a literary amateur. Untouched, apparently, by humanism, and clinging tenaciously in many places to the old traditions sanctioned by the Scots "makaris," he was bold enough to try new experiments in prose, and to endeavour to produce effects hitherto unattempted in that backward medium. These effects may not have been always successful or even legitimate, and the influence of *The Complaynt* upon subsequent Scots prose is to all intents and purposes imperceptible; but its author deserves the full mead of applause due to all enterprising pioneers in an interesting cause.

We now approach the consideration of what, for convenience' sake, may be comprehensively termed the prose literature of the Reformation. We have already seen how the poets had been preparing the way, by their attacks upon the clergy and the Church, for the advent of a change of faith, and how a translation of the New Testament had been made by a Scotsman in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. It was not, however, until 1533 that the earliest exposition of the reformed doctrine in the Scots tongue was published, and of that only a few copies apparently got into circulation. The work in question was *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine*,[1] and its author was John Gau or Gall (149 ?–1553), an *alumnus* of St. Andrews, who was obliged to quit the country for his profession of the new heretical opinions. He found a refuge at Malmö, in that part of Sweden which still remained subject to the Danish monarchy, and there he produced the book just mentioned, which is a more or less faithful translation of a Danish tractate by Christiern Pedersen, itself a version from the German. It consists of a commentary upon the Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the *Pater Noster*, which Gau considers to be the three essential documents for the believing Christian, and, whatever may have been the case with some of the later Reformers, there is no suggestion of Anglicising about the style in which it is written. Here, for instance, is Gau's rendering of the Creed :—

"I trou in God fader almichtine, maker of heuine and zeird, and in Jesu Christ his sone our onlie Lord, the quhilk vesz consawit of the halie Spreit and born of Maria virgine, he sufert onder Poncio Pilat to be crucifeit to de and to be zeirdit; he descendit to the hel, and raisz fra deid the thrid day; he ascendit to the heuine, and sittis at almichtine God the fader's richt hand; he is to cum agane to juge quyk and deid; I trou in the halie spreit; I trow that thair is one halie chrissine kirk and ane communione of sanctis; I trou forgiffine of sinis; I trou the resurrectione of ye flesch; I trou the euerlastand liff."

[1] Ed. Mitchell, S. T. S., Edin., 1888.

Gau's is an interesting work both from a theological and from a literary point of view; but it argues no undue predilection for the unreformed faith to hold that the so-called *Catechism*[1] (1552) of Archbishop Hamilton is even more so. John Hamilton (1512–71), who succeeded David Beaton in the Archbishopric of St. Andrews, was among the ablest and most respectable of the supporters of the old order in Church and State, for the cause of which, indeed, he perished on the scaffold. He published his *Catechism* at a time when, though the Romanist party still had the upper hand *de facto*, the teaching of the reformers was beginning to make considerable way among the people of Scotland. In arrangement and contents, it follows Gau's volume tolerably closely, expounding, first of all, the Commandments, next the Creed, next the Sacraments, and, finally, Prayer, including the Lord's Prayer. It was designed, however, not for the use of the laity, but for that of the parish priests, who were directed to read it to their congregations from the pulpit in sermon time, and to peruse it beforehand, in order that they might do justice to it—a command which the degree of education to which the rank and file of the clergy had attained rendered by no means superfluous. Its tone is throughout persuasive rather than sharply controversial, practical rather than dogmatic; and Mr. Law's inference cannot be gainsaid that those responsible for its promulgation "were conscious that the primary evils with which they had to contend were ignorance, religious indifference, and a contempt for the priestly offices, rather than positive false doctrine." But it cannot fairly be said to be indefinite or "wobbling" in its purport. Its teaching appears to be firmly and unmistakably that of anti-tridentine Rome, albeit there is absolute silence about the prerogatives of the Pope; and nothing in its tenour or language countenances the speculation that a *via media* might possibly have been found for Scotland between Geneva at the one extreme and Rome at the

[1] Ed. Law. Oxford, 1884.

other. The diction and vocabulary are good Middle Scots, and the translations into the vernacular of the texts from the Vulgate which the compiler quotes in support of his contentions, are vigorous and racy. We forbear to give a specimen of its direct theological exposition, but rather submit the fine passage with which the *Catechism* concludes :—

"In the end of this buke, first we desyre yow Vicaris and Curattis, quhilk ar to reid the samyn to your parochionaris, that afore ye begyn to reid it at ony tyme, first advert weil and tak tent to the correctioun of certane faultis colleckit and put in the end of this buke, to that effect that ye kennand the faultis and how thai suld be amendit, may the bettir reid the samyn buke to the edificatioun of the people, for thair is na buke sa perfitly prentit, bot sum faultis dois eschaip in the prenting thairof.

"Secundly, we exhort yowall that ar Personis of kirkis, quhilk hes ressavit apon yow the cure of saulis, quhat degree or name saevir ye have, that ye wald apply your diligens to do your office, that is to say, to preche and teche syncerly the evangil of God to your parochionaris according as ye ar oblissit to do be the law of God and haly kirk. And trow nocht that this buke sal discharge yow afore God fra executioun of your forsaid office, for trewly it is nocht set out to that intentioun nother to geve to yow ony baldnes or occasioun of negligence and idilnes. Heirfor for the tender mercy of God, and for the lufe that ye have or suld have to the bitter passioun of Christ Jesu our salviour, quhais spiritual flock bocht with his awin precious blud ye have takin to keip and feid, that ye failye nocht to do your office, ilk ane of yow to your awin parochionaris, seand that thai pay to yow thair dewtie sufficiently. Consider weil and dout nocht bot that ye ar als mekil bund to thame as thai ar bund to yow. This do, as ye will eschaip the terribil vengeance of God's judgement quhilk he schoris [threatens] to cum apon yow in the thrid cheptour of Ezeckiel, sayand : *Sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram,* I sall (sais our eternal judge) require out of thi handis the blud of him that perissis throw thi negligens. And gif ye be wise, lat nevir the weichty word of sanct Paule gang out of your remembrans, quhilk is writtin in the last cheptour to the Hebrewis : *Ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri.* Thai that ar gud pastouris watchis perfitely, as men that ar to geve ane accompt to God for your saulis.

"Thridly, O christin pepil, we exhort yow with all diligence, heir, understand, and keip in your remembrance, the haly wordis of God,

quhilk in this present Catechisme ar trewly and catholykly exponit to your spiritual edification. And albeit al thingis be nocht sa fullily and perfitly comprehendit heirin to your understanding as ye wald require, we exhort yow in Christ (for quhais honour and your profite only this buke is set out be your pastouris), that ye will ressave and take the samyn in the best part, and wey the gud myndis and willis of thame that wald have had the same bettir, baith compilit, correckit, and prentit, to your saule helth, gif the tyme mycht have tholit it. And gif ye persaif be frequent heiring heirof, your self spiritually instruckit mair than ye have bein in tymes bygane, geve the thankis thairof only to God, the father, the sonne, and the haly spreit, to quhom be gevin all honour and glore, louing and praise for now and evir. Amen."[1]

Passing by with the mere mention of its name, a treatise on *Justification by Faith* (1548), from the pen of Henry Balnaves (1502–70), we arrive at a man, who, whatever his distinction and rank may be as a man of letters, occupies the foremost place in the memory of all his countrymen, and in the regard of many, if not most, as a politician and a divine. John Knox[2] was born in the vicinity of Haddington—a stronghold of the ancient church—in 1505. He was educated at the burgh school of that town, and at the University of Glasgow. There he had a year of John Major's teaching, which left an indelible mark on his intellect. His methods of reasoning and argument were thenceforward typically scholastic, and in his treatment of theology, as Mr. Hume Brown well says,[3] he was ever "essentially a schoolman." After his departure from the University, his career is for a time somewhat obscure, but we know that he was in priest's orders, and that he held the office of Apostolical Notary in the diocese of St. Andrews. It is in that venerable city that he once more reappears to our view, joining the band of pious reformers who, after making short work of Cardinal Beaton, had retained possession of the Castle.

[1] From Archbishop Hamilton's *Catechism*, ed. Law, p. 289.

[2] *Works*, ed. Laing, 6 vols., 1846–64; *Life*, by M'Crie, 1812, 5th ed. 2 vols., 1831; by Hume Brown, 2 vols., 1895.

[3] *Op. cit.* i. p. 27.

When the Castle surrendered in 1547, Knox was handed over to the French, who dispatched him to the galleys, whence he was released two years later, on the application of the English Government. The period from 1549 to 1553 he spent in England, in the ministry of the now reformed Church, returning a genuine *nolo episcopari* to the offer of a bishopric from King Edward VI. After the accession of Mary in 1553, he crossed the Channel, and spent the whole of the next five years (with the exception of a flying visit paid to Scotland in 1555) on the Continent, chiefly at Frankfort and Geneva, busily engaged in the affairs of the Reformed Churches, and in close contact with the master-mind of Calvin.

Meanwhile, affairs had been ripening in Scotland. The celebrated riot of St. Giles's Day took place in Edinburgh in 1558, and the "rascal multitude" had begun the congenial work of destruction at Perth. Knox returned home, and the cause of the Reformation progressed exceedingly, the "plan of campaign" to be pursued by the Reformers being determined at post-cœnal gatherings, when the policy of "thorough" generally seems attractive. So mightily did the work prosper, such success attended the propaganda of liberty of thought and revolt from authority, that after 1560, "the Papistes war so confounded that none within the Realme durst more avow the hearing or saying of messe, than the theavis of Lyddesdail durst avow thair stowth in presence of ane upright judge."[1] But when the victory seemed to be won, everything was spoilt by the arrival of the Queen in her dominions and the wavering of the weak-kneed Protestants, who innocently asked, "Why may not the Queyn have hir ain messe?" The battle had to be fought all over again, and thus the remainder of Knox's life, which terminated in 1572, was spent in a round of contention, which not even the murder of Darnley and its consequences could convert into overwhelming triumph. For the rapacity and selfishness of the nobility there is little excuse to be offered.

[1] Knox, *Works*, ii. p. 265.

No one can help regretting, for one thing, that Knox's high ideals of education were but imperfectly realised, owing to the diversion of Church property into illegitimate channels. But this at all events may be said, that the occurrences of the troubled period between 1567 and 1580, however deplorable from some points of view, secured the escape of Scotland from the imminence of an ecclesiastical tyranny compared with which the yoke of Rome had been almost beneficent, and which not the most strenuous efforts of later reformers could succeed in imposing outright upon a sullen and independent people. Had the Reformed Church contrived to retain all the wealth of the Un-reformed, it is appalling to think what the subsequent history of the country might have been.

For many years of his life, Knox's pen was busily employed. He plunged eagerly into the political and religious controversies of his time, and he was a diligent letter-writer, having a great gift for administering spiritual advice and consolation to the weaker sex through the medium of correspondence. Two of his political or ecclesiastico-political performances were less well-timed than well-intentioned. The *Faythful admonition unto the professours of Godis truthe in England* (1554), a violent attack upon the Queen of that country, written at Dieppe, not only procured the subsequent banishment of its author from Frankfort, but, struck consternation into the hearts of the English reformers, and was more responsible than anything else for kindling "the fires of Smithfield." The effect of the famous *First Blast of the Trumpet against the monstruous Regiment of Women* (1558) must have seemed even more disastrous from Knox's point of view. It completely alienated from him the sympathy of Elizabeth, who succeeded to her sister shortly after its publication, and made it certain that Knox would have no hand in finishing off and consolidating the work of the Reformation in England. But tact has never been claimed even by Knox's most ardent worshippers for his strong point; nay, they have rather been disposed to glory in his want of it. His

principal remaining works include *A Godly Letter of Warning* (1554), addressed to the English Protestants, an *Appelation to the Nobility and Estates of Scotland* (1558) and *A Letter to the Commonalty of Scotland* (1559), a long pamphlet or treatise (rather) on *Predestination* (1560), and last, but most assuredly not least, *The History of the Reformatioun of Religioun within the Realme of Scotland* (*circ.* 1566–67).[1]

Though it is a simple enough matter to talk platitudes about taking into account the spirit of Knox's age, and remembering that he was intellectually, morally, and logically no worse than his neighbours, it is in truth by no means easy to avoid applying to him, I do not say the standards familiar to modern habits of thought, but, the standards of reason and common-sense as they have existed in every age. It is merely impossible to avoid recognising that in his first "reasoning" with his sovereign, of which he gives us so graphic a report, that unhappy lady secured a complete dialectical victory. She said no more than the truth when she pointed out that the necessary result of Knox's theory of government was that her subjects were bound to obey him and not her; and she dealt even more conclusively with his claim to have the authority of the Bible at his back. "Ye interprete the Scriptures in one maner, and thei [the Pope and his Cardinals] in ane other: Whom shall I beleve? And who shalbe judge?" There is the whole difficulty in a nutshell. No wonder Knox was persuaded that she had in her "a proud mynd, a crafty witt, and ane indurat hearte against God and his treuth."[2] Small, indeed, except to a fanatical enthusiast, can have been the consolation of reducing his opponent to tears, at a subsequent interview, so that Marnock, her page, or "chalmerboy," could scarcely "get

[1] Not published until 1644, and then with a far from accurate text, ed. David Buchanan. It will, of course, be found in Laing's ed. of Knox, *ut sup.* An abridged edition, with modernised spelling, ed. C. J. Guthrie, was published in 1898. Knox was also *pars maxima* in drawing up the remarkable *Confession of Faith* and *Book of Discipline* of 1560, re-enacted 1567.

[2] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 286.

neapkynes to hold hyr eyes drye; and the owling, besydes womanlie weaping, stayed hir speiche."[1]

Similarly, it is impossible to take the *First Blast*[2] as a serious piece of argument. Can we for a moment imagine a mind like Shakespeare's assenting to anything like it? The thesis of that tract is, that "to promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion, or empire above any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance, and finallie it is the subversion of good order, of all equitie and justice." This may be true or it may be false; but it is obviously a generalisation suggested to Knox by two particular instances: Mary of England and Mary of Lorraine. Never, as it turned out, was there a more shortsighted or unlucky stroke of general-proposition-making; and we may be confident that had the two Marys been well-disposed to God's saints—to wit, the Reformers—it would never have occurred to Knox that female rule was "contrarious to God's reveled will." And if his main contention wears all the appearance of being invented to suit the occasion, the proofs with which he bolsters it up do little to give it even plausibility. He runs through what he conceives to be the teaching of the Bible on the subject; circumvents rather lamely the awkward instances of Deborah and Judith; cites copiously from the Fathers of the Church; and, in short, treats his subject in much the same manner that a mediæval didactic poet employs to demonstrate the mutability of fortune or the liability of pride to a fall.

It is more, then, for the sake of the form than of the matter that I here present two short extracts, the latter of which has the merit of illustrating the unbounded license

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 387.

[2] There is a convenient edition, ed. Arber, 1880. See Mr. R. L. Stevenson's Essay on *John Knox and his Relations to Women*, in *Familiar Studies*, 1882.

which he allowed himself in attacking those whom he regarded as God's enemies no less than his own :—

"In the natural body of man, God hath apointed an ordre, that the head shall occupie the uppermost place. And the head hath he joyned with the bodie, that frome it doth life and motion flowe to the rest of the membres. In it hath he placed the eye to see, the eare to hear, and the tonge to speak, which offices are apointed to none other membre of the bodie. The rest of the membres have every one their own place and office apointed: but none may have nether the place nor office of the heade. For who wolde not judge that bodie to be a monstre where there was no head eminent above the rest, but that the eyes were in the handes, the tonge and mouth beneth the belie, and the eares in the feet? Men, I say, shulde not onlie pronounce this bodie to be a monstre: but assuredlie they might conclude that such a bodie coulde not long indure. And no lesse monstruous is the bodie of that common welth where a woman beareth empire. For ether doth it lack a laufull heade (as in very dede it doth) or els there is an idol exalted in the place of the true head. An idol I call that which hath the forme and apparance, but lacketh the vertue and strength, which the name and proportion do resemble and promise. As images have face, nose, eyes, mouth, handes, and feet painted, but the use of the same can not the craft and art of man geve them: as the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David teacheth us saying: They have eyes, but they see not, mouth, but they speake not, nose, but they smell not, handes and feet, but they nether touche nor have power to go. And suche, I say, is everie realme and nation where a woman beareth dominion. For in despite of God (he of his just judgement so geving them ouer in to a reprobat minde) may a realme, I confess, exalt up a woman to that monstriferous honor, to be esteemed as head. But impossible it is to man and angel to geve unto her the properties and perfect offices of a laufull heade; for the same God that hath denied power to the hand to speake, to the belly to heare, and to the feet to see, hath denied to woman power to commande man, and hath taken away wisdome to consider, and providence to foresee, the thingis that be profitable to the common welth; yea, finallie, he hath denied to her in any case to be head to man, but plainly hath pronounced that 'Man is head to woman, even as Christ is heade to all man.'" [1]

[1] From *The First Blast*, ed. Arber, p. 27.

"The more that I consider the subversion of Goddes ordre, which he hath placed generallie in all livinge thinges, the more I do wondre at the blindnes of man, who doth not consider himself in this case so degenerate that the brute beastes are to be preferred to him in this behalfe. For nature hath in all beastes printed a certein marke of dominion in the male, and a certein subjection in the female, whiche they kepe inviolate. For no man ever sawe the lion make obedience and stoupe before the lionesse, neither yet can it be proved that the hinde taketh the conducting of the heard amongest the hartes. And yet (alas) man, who by the mouth of God hath dominion apointed to him over woman, doth not onlie to his own shame stoupe under the obedience of women, but also in despit of God and his apointed ordre rejoyseth and mainteineth that monstruous authoritie, as a thing laufull and just. The insolent joy, the bonefiers, and banketing which were in London and els where in England, when that cursed Iesabell was proclaimed qwene, did witnesse to my hart that men were becomen more then enraged. For els howe coulde they so have rejoysed at their owne confusion and certein destruction? For what man was there of such base judgement (supposing that he had any light of God) who did not see the erecting of that monstre to be the overthrowe of true religion, and the assured destruction of England, and of the auncient liberties thereof? And yet never the lesse all men so triumphed as if God had delivered them frome all calamitie."[1]

It will be seen that the language and spelling are essentially those of Southern England, and indeed it was a commonplace of his opponents that he "knapped Suddron" so as to be unintelligible to a plain Scot.[2] We may be sure that the use in Scotland of an English version of the Scriptures and the currency of Knox's controversial pamphlets were the most effective agents at this time in undermining the position of the Scots tongue as a literary dialect.

But, after all, it is not in his pamphlets and his tractates that the real Knox reveals himself in literature: it is in the *History of the Reformation*—a record of events which he him-

[1] From *The First Blast*, ed. Arber, p. 29.

[2] See, for example, a well-known passage in Winzet's letter to Knox of October 27, 1563, in which he taxes the Reformer with having forgotten "our auld plaine Scottis, quhilk your mother lerit zou."

self had witnessed, and in many of which he had played the most conspicuous part. We do not go to such a work for impartial statements of fact. Contemporary history must always be closely scrutinised and carefully tested; and a double measure of precaution is necessary when the pen that writes it is held by a man of Knox's constitution. When Knox speaks of what he knows, he may be trusted with certain obvious reservations, and it is to his credit that he habitually quotes original documents in full. When he speaks without first-hand knowledge, or merely states his suspicions, we are often justified in disregarding him. The mantle of the prophet rarely fits the historian. What we do find in the work is (to revive an old-fashioned piece of critics' slang) a "human document" of inestimable importance. There are life, vigour, passion, and, above all, "temperament" in the book; the temperament, not merely of Knox himself, but the temperament of thousands of his countrymen concentrated, as it were, in one man.[1] The very defects which disqualify him for a serious controversialist[2]—the very flaws which mar, if they do not altogether obscure, his nobler qualities as a man—are the salt of his *History*, which stands forth as an unconscious essay in self-portraiture no less masterly than that of Pepys or of Gibbon. The fearlessness, the tenacity of purpose, the pressing forward to the goal, the unquestioning conviction of a mission, are all there; and so are the defects of these qualities: the inhumanity, the coarseness of fibre, the acrimony, the vindictiveness, the *rancune*, which have so often found amazingly eloquent expression in our national literature. It is all the revelation of a striking

[1] An admirable discussion of Knox as an historian will be found in Sir W. Stirling Maxwell's *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*, 1891, pp. 298 *et seq.*

[2] One specimen of his characteristically exaggerated way of putting things is his statement that "one messe was more fearful to him than gif ten thousand armed enemyes war landed in any pairte of the Realme of purpose to suppress the hoill religioun" (Works, ii. p. 276).

and masterful individuality, of which it is the simple truth to say that the "meek and quiet spirit" formed no ornament.

It was Knox's design in his *History* to "interlace merynes with earnest matters," and to diversify his narrative with "meary bourds," *i.e.*, jests. It must be confessed that these witticisms on some occasions miss fire, and that on others we are irresistibly reminded of a well-known observation of Johnson's on the merriment of the profession to which Knox had the honour to belong. Yet Knox's vein of humour was deep, and, if his pleasantries are always grim and not seldom bitter, they have frequently the root of the matter in them. Admirable, for example, is his description of the behaviour of certain persons after the passing of the Act of 1542, c. 12 (*supra*, p. 100, *n.*), which legalised translations of Holy Scripture in the vernacular :—

"We grant that some (alace !) prophaned that blessed wourd ; for some that, perchance, had never read ten sentenses in it, had it maist common in thare hand : thei wald chop thare familiares on the cheak with it and say, 'This hes lyne hyd under my bed-feitt these ten yearis.' Otheris wold glorie, 'O ! how oft have I been in danger for this booke : How secreatlie have I stollen fra my wyff at mydnycht to reid upoun it.' And this was done of many to maik courte thairby."[1]

Nor could anything be better in its own sardonic way than the account of the St. Giles's riot, or (in a somewhat lighter strain) than the description of the struggle for precedence between the Archbishop of Glasgow and his brother prelate of St. Andrews in the cathedral of the former city :—

"Cuming furth (or going in, all is one) att the qweir doore of Glasgw Kirk, begynnes stryving for state betuix the two croce beraris, so that from glowmyng thei come to schouldering ; from schouldering thei go to buffettis, and from dry blawes, by neffis and neffelling [fisticuffs] ; and then for cheriteis saik, thei crye,

[1] *Works*, i. p. 100

Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, and assayis quhilk of the croces war fynast mettall, which staf was strongast, and which berar could best defend his maisteris pre-eminence; and that thare should be no superioritie in that behalf, to the ground gois boyth the croces. And then begane no litill fray, but yitt a meary game; for rockettis war rent, typpetis war torne, crounis war knapped, and syd gounis micht have bene sein wantonly wag from the one wall to the other: Many of thame lacked beardis, and that was the more pitie; and tharefore could not bukkill other by the byrse, as bold men wold haif doune. Butt fy on the jackmen that did nott thare dewitie; for had the one parte of thame reacontered the other, then had all gone rycht. But the sanctuarye, we suppose, saved the lyves of many. How mearelye that ever this be writtin, it was bitter bowrding to the Cardinall and his courte. It was more then irregularitie; yea, it mycht weall have bene judged lease majestie to the sone of perdition, the Pape's awin persone; and yitt the other in his folly, as proud as a packocke, wold lett the Cardinall know that he was a Bischop when the other was butt Betoun befoir he gat Abirbrothok. This inemitie was judged mortall, and without all hope of reconsiliatioun."[1]

Such passages are much preferable from the artistic point of view to those in which Knox lets his temper run away with him, describing the priests as "bloody boucheouris," denouncing James V. as a "lecherous and avaricious tyrant," taunting his opponents with their physical peculiarities, and generally employing the sort of vituperative language to which the "dinging" of the pulpit "in blads" would supply the most fitting accompaniment. Between the preaching of a Reformer and the "flyting" of a Court poet there was more in common than might have been expected. The most glaring instance of Knox foaming at the mouth, as it were, is furnished by the report of George Wishart's trial.[2] But when his angry passions are under better control and

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 146.

[2] *Works*, i. p. 149. It is right to say that this episode bears to be quoted from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. But few, I think, can help concurring in Mr. Lang's view that it was originally contributed to that work by Knox himself. If not, let no one ever presume to rely on the internal evidence of tone and style.

direction, they enhance the effect of his story in no ordinary degree; and Knox attains his highest eminence as a writer in the description of Cardinal Beaton's murder:—

"But airlie upoun the Setterday, in the mornyng, the 29 of Maij, war thei in syndree cumpanyes in the Abbay kirk-yard, not far distant frome the Castell. First, the yettis being oppin, and the draw-brig lettin down, for receaving of lyme and stanes, and other thingis necessar for buylding (for Babylon was almost finished) —first, we say, assayed Williame Kirkcaldy of Grange youngar, and with him sex personis, and gottin enteress, held purpose with the portare, 'Yf my Lord was walking?' who answered 'No.' (And so it was in dead; for he had bene busy at his comptis with Maistres Marioun Ogilbye that nycht, who was espyed to departe frome him by the previe posterne that morning; and tharefore qwyetness, after the reuillis of phisick, and a morne sleap was requisite for my Lord). While the said Williame and the Portar talked, and his servandis maid thame to look the work and the workemen, approched Normound Leslye with his company; and becaus thei war in no great nomber, thei easily gat entress. Thei address thame to the myddest of the close, and immediatlie came Johne Leslye, somewhat rudlye, and four personis with him. The portar, fearing, wold have drawin the brig; but the said Johne, being entered thairon, stayed and lap in. And while the portar maid him for defence, his head was brokin, the keyis tackin frome him, and he castin in the fowsea; and so the place was seased. The schowt arises; the workemen, to the nomber of mo then a hundreth, ran of the wallis, and war without hurte put furth at the wicked yett. The first thing that ever was done, Williame Kirkcaldye took the garde of the prevey posterne, fearing that the fox should have eschaped. Then go the rest to the gentilmenis chalmeris, and without violence done to any man, thei put mo then fyftie personis to the yett: The nomber that interprised and did this was but sextein personis. The Cardinall, awalkned with the schouttis, asked from his windo, What ment that noyse? It was answered, That Normound Leslye had tackin his Castell. Which understand, he ran to the posterne; but perceaving the passage to be keapt without, he returned qwicklye to his chalmer, took his twa-handed sword, and garte his chalmer child cast kystes and other impedimentis to the doore. In this meane tyme came Johne Leslye unto it, and biddis open. The Cardinall askyne, 'Who calles?' he answeris, 'My name is Leslye.' He re-demandis, 'Is that Normond?' The other sayis, 'Nay; my

name is Johnne.' 'I will have Normound,' sayis the Cardinall; 'for he is my freind.' 'Content yourself with such as ar hear; for other shall ye gett nane.' Thare war with the said Johnne, James Melven, a man familiarlie acquented with Maister George Wisharte, and Petir Carmichaell, a stout gentilman. In this meanetyme, whill thei force at the doore, the Cardinall hydis a box of gold under coallis that war laide in a secreat cornar. At lenth he asked, 'Will ye save my lyef?' The said Johnne answered, 'It may be that we will.' 'Nay,' sayis the Cardinall, 'Swear unto me by Goddis woundis, and I will open unto yow.' Then answered the said Johnne, 'It that was said, is unsaid;' and so cryed, 'Fyre, fyre;' (for the doore was verray stark;) and so was brought ane chymlay full of burnyng coallis. Which perceaved, the Cardinall or his chalmer child (it is uncertane) opened the doore, and the Cardinall satt doune in a chyre, and cryed, 'I am a preast; I am a preast; ye will nott slay me.' The said Johnne Leslye (according to his formar vowes) strook him first anes or twyse, and so did the said Petir. But James Melven (a man of nature most gentill and most modest) perceaving thame boyth in cholere, withdrew thame, and said, 'This worke and judgement of God (althought it be secreit) aught to be done with greattar gravitie;' and presenting unto him the point of the sweard, said, 'Repent thee of thy former wicked lyef, but especiallie of the schedding of the blood of that notable instrument of God, Maister George Wisharte, which albeit the flame of fyre consumed befoir men; yitt cryes it, a vengeance upoun thee, and we from God ar sent to revenge it: For heir, befoir my God, I protest, that nether the hetterent [hatred] of thy persone, the luif of thy riches, nor the fear of any truble thow could have done to me in particulare, moved nor movis me to stryk thee; but only becaus thow hast bein, and remanes ane obstinat ennemye against Christ Jesus and his holy Evangell.' And so he stroke him twyse or thrise trowght with a stog sweard; and so he fell, never word heard out of his mouth, but 'I am a preast, I am a preast; fy, fy: all is gone.'

"Whill they war thus occupyed with the Cardinall, the fray rises in the toune. The Provest assembles the communitie, and cumis to the fowseis syd, crying, 'What have ye done with my Lord Cardinall? Whare is my Lord Cardinall? Have ye slayne my Lord Cardinall? Let us see my Lord Cardinall.' Thei that war within answered gentilye, 'Best it war unto yow to returne to your awin houssis; for the man ye call the Cardinall has receaved his reward, and in his awin persone will truble the warld no more.' But then more enraigedlye thei cry, 'We shall never departe till that we see him.' And so was he

brought to the East blokhouse head, and schawen dead ower the wall to the faythless multitude, which wold not beleve befoir it saw: How miserably lay David Betoun, cairfull Cardinall. And so thei departed, without *Requiem alternam*, and *Requiescat in pace*, song for his saule. Now, becaus the wether was hote (for it was in Maij, as ye have heard) and his funerallis could not suddandly be prepared, it was thowght best, to keap him frome stynckíng, to geve him great salt ynewcht, a cope of lead, and a nuk in the boddome of the Sea-toore (a place whare many of Goddis childrene had bein empreasoned befoir) to await what exequeis his brethrene the Bischoppes wold prepare for him.

These thingis we wreat mearelie [merrily]. But we wold that the Reader should observe Goddis just judgmentis, and how that he can deprehend the worldly wyse in thare awin wisdome, mak thare table to be a snare to trape thare awin feit, and thare awin presupposed strenth to be thare awin destructioun. . . ."[1]

This is superb, if not distinctively Christian, and the "These thingis we wreat mearelie" is the stroke of a conscious or unconscious master. It reveals Knox's temperament like a flash of lightning.

Not even the most stalwart opponent of his views will deny that Knox was cast in a great mould, or that there was something colossal about his genius. What he might have been without this element of the titanic we may guess when we review the life of George Buchanan[2] (1506–82), a man as destitute of the Aristotelian greatness of soul as a scholar of his parts and accomplishments well could be. A Celt from the Lennox by birth, he was educated partly at the University of Paris, partly at that of St. Andrews, where he came into

[1] *History of the Reformation*, bk. i. in *Works*, ed. Laing, vol. i. pp. 174 *et seq.* It will be seen that the style and language of the *History* (as Mr. Hewison has pointed out, *apud* Winzet's *Certain Tractates*, vol. ii. p. 151), are not nearly so Anglified as those of the earlier pamphlets, though it would seem that, at one time at all events, even Knox's preaching was considered to savour of Anglicism. See Mr. Guthrie's ed. of the *History*, *ut sup.*, pref., p. xii.

[2] *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ruddiman, ed. 1715; Leyden, 1725. *Vernacular Writings*, ed. P. Hume Brown, S.T.S., 1892. *George Buchanan, Humanist and Reformer*, by P. Hume Brown, Edin., 1890.

contact with John Major, the representatative of the old learning, as Buchanan was to be of the new. He graduated M.A. at Paris, in 1528, and became a teacher in St. Barbe, one of the fifty colleges comprehended in that University; but he hated this course of life, of which he has duly commemorated the *dèsagrèments* in a Latin poem. Returning to Scotland in 1535, he became involved in a quarrel with the Franciscans, whom he had lampooned in the *Somnium* and the *Palinodia*. His most stinging satire against their order, the *Franciscanus*, was not completed until 1560. Ultimately he was compelled to flee to France, by way of England, in 1539, and for the next three years he acted as Regent at the College of Bordeaux. Thereafter he accepted an appointment at the newly instituted University of Coimbra, where he composed his version of "that singulare werke of Dauid his Psalmes, in Latine meter and poesie," as Knox describes it, and, among other things, the poems to Leonora ("Matre impudica filia impudicior," is the promising exordium of one of them), which doubtless gave him increased facility in the art of reviling women. He returned from Portugal to France in 1552, and his compositions during the next decade embrace an elaborate metrical didactic treatise, *De Sphaera* (*circ.* 1557), and an epithalamium on the marriage of the luckless "nymph" to whom his *Psalms* were dedicated, and whom he was afterwards to assail with all the ferocity of senile spite, and all the weapons of unscrupulous calumny.

In the early sixties we behold Buchanan back in Scotland, writing Latin masques [1] for the Court, reading Livy with the Queen, pensioned by her bounty, and asking for more.[2] In short, we find him basking in the sunshine of royal

[1] Among Buchanan's works are four tragedies—two on classical, two on Scriptural subjects—of which we need say no more than that they are all modelled on Seneca, and have little of interest or moment in them save their excellent Latin.

[2] Let it be mentioned that Buchanan's apologists desire it to be borne in mind that the pension was very irregularly paid, if paid at all.

favour. But Buchanan was by far too high-minded and public-spirited a man to let the recollection of such incidents stand in the way of his turning and rending the hand that had caressed and fed him. After the murder of Darnley, he became the obedient instrument of the faction which supported the infant King against his mother. He proceeded with the Commissioners to London in 1568, and there laid before the Queen of England the formal indictment against her cousin known as the *Detectio*. This document is practically worthless as throwing any light upon the tangled history of the period, for Buchanan dutifully set down what he was told, and not what himself knew or had ascertained.[1] It contains at least one manifest cock-and-bull story, and is grossly inconsistent in many particulars with the account which Buchanan gave of the same events in his *Historia*.[2] It is unnecessary to suppose that he lied deliberately, if he did lie. His motives were probably of the most conscientious description, as he understood conscience. Besides, "the subject was one after the humanist's own heart, commanding as it did the interest of Europe, and offering the most splendid scope for all the turns of Ciceronian rhetoric. Buchanan wrote it in the full consciousness that his reputation as a scholar was in question."[3] Who could help taking great pains to slander his friend and Queen in circumstances and under the influence of motives such as these? If this be the last word to be said for their hero by Buchanan's champions, we may suggest that it would be safer for them to fall back upon the old excuse of the fondness for "Billingsgate" which distinguished all the humanists.

Times were indeed changed with George Buchanan. It was no longer—

[1] So at least testifies Sir James Melville, who adds that by this time Buchanan was become "sleeprie and cairles."

[2] See Lang, *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 34.

[3] *George Buchanan*, by P. Hume Brown, *ut sup.*, p. 213.

"Nympha, Caledoniae quae nunc feliciter orae
Missa per innumeros sceptra tueris avos :
Quae sortem antevenis meritis, virtutibus annos,
Sexum animis, morum nobilitate genus ;"

and so forth ; but it was—

"Quamvis vetusto stemmate splendeas,
Regina, Princeps optima principum,
Quâcunque magnum sol per orbem
Flammiferos agitat jugales," &c.,

and the "Regina" was Elizabeth. The sentiments, however, which he subsequently expressed in his *De jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579), sentiments of a strong anti-monarchical cast, can scarcely have recommended him to his new patroness, and the preferment which he was now to enjoy came to him in Scotland. In 1566 he had been appointed Principal of St. Leonard's College, in St. Andrews—a house that had always been well disposed to the new learning ; and in 1570 he was appointed tutor to his three-year-old sovereign. Unless tradition be a lying rogue, he carried out the educational theories of Solomon to their utmost extent upon the person of his unfortunate pupil. But of much cry came little wool, for he succeeded in turning out a youth only less inhuman, arrogant, and pedantic than himself. During the last decade of his life he held several public offices, presumably of a lucrative nature, and it is astonishing that he should have died leaving barely enough money to pay the charges of his funeral. His later years were devoted to the composition of his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, in twenty books ; a work of moderate authority and huge bulk, first published in 1582, and little likely to be reprinted now.

Whatever Buchanan's faults may be as a man, it is pretty generally agreed that he has none as a Latinist. He enjoyed probably a higher reputation in the learned circles of Europe than has fallen to the lot of any of his countrymen ; and he was looked upon at once as an unrivalled scholar and as a great

poet. Montaigne, his umquhil pupil at Bordeaux, speaks of him as *ce grand poète Ecossais;* Grotius describes him as *numen illud Scotiæ;* and Joseph Scaliger, who was *not* his pupil,[1] pronounces him to be far and away the greatest Latin poet in Europe.[2] His principal achievement in Latin verse was his rendering of the *Psalms*, which (I cannot help agreeing with Mr. Saintsbury) should never have been undertaken, but which, once undertaken, has probably been carried through by him with the highest degree of success possible or conceivable.[3] That any one can seriously prefer Buchanan's verses, elegant and correct as they may be, to the majestic prose of the Vulgate is indeed almost incredible, but that is no reason for declining to award the palm of merit to Buchanan rather than to Arthur Johnstone (*infra*, p. 245), his most formidable rival in a delightful art. The reader who cares to dip into Buchanan's *Psalms*,[4] will find the 46th and the 137th as satisfactory as any of them.

Buchanan's contributions to vernacular prose are not numerous, and have been collected in a convenient volume by the Scottish Text Society. He drew up an elaborate scheme for the reorganization of his own university, which is well worth the attention of educational theorists and reformers; and was, besides, responsible for an *Admonitioun to the Trew Lordis* (1571), and a political satire entitled *Chamaeleon* (same year), directed to the address of Maitland of Lethington. Of the *Admonitioun* and *Chamaeleon* Mr. Hume Brown has spoken with rare enthusiasm. They are, he declares, "the finest

[1] See Mark Pattison, *Essays*, Oxford, 1889, i. p. 134.

[2] The same critic's complimentary couplet is worth quoting :—

"Imperii fuerat Romani Scotia limes.
Romani eloquii Scotia finis erit."

[3] See Mr. Saintsbury's instructive chapter on "The Harvest Time of Humanism," in his *Earlier Renaissance*, Edin., 1901.

[4] There is a neat little edition (Edin., 1815), which may doubtless be picked up second-hand for a modest sum.

specimens we possess of vernacular Scottish prose. In no other writer who has used the Scottish tongue as his instrument, have we the same combination of natural gifts with the disciplined skill of the literary artist which we find in Buchanan." [1] I confess that to me this eulogy seems grotesquely exaggerated, and that Buchanan's prose, as regards style, appears no very wonderful thing after all. But even to take a somewhat broader view, neither of these *brochures* can be classed with the really great pamphlets of literature. Buchanan never got rid of the characteristic taint of the academic politician—a class of which he is a thoroughly representative member. The *Chamaeleon*, indeed, opens well enough, as the reader shall see for himself:—

"Thair is a certane kynd of beist callit chmaeleon, engenderit in sic cuntreis as ye sone hes mair strenth in yan in this yle of Brettane, the quhilk, albeit it be small of corporance, noghtyeless it is of ane strange nature, the quhilk makis it to be na less celebrat and spoken of than sum beastis of greittar quantitie. The proprietie is marvalous, for quhat thing evir it be applicat to, it semis to be of the samyn cullour, and imitatis all hewis except onelie the quhyte and reid, and for yis caus ancient writtaris commounlie comparis it to ane flatterare, quhilk imitatis all ye haill maneris of quhome he fenzeis him self to be freind to except quhyte, quhilk is takin to be ye symboll and tokin gevin commounlie in divise of colouris to signifee sempilnes and loyaltie, and reid synifying manlines and heroyicall courage. This applicatioun being so usit yit peradventure mony that hes nowther sene ye said beist, nor na perfyte portraict of it wald beleif sic thing not to be trew. I will therfore set furth schortlie ye descriptioun of sic ane monsture not lang ago engendrit in Scotland in ye cuntre of Lowthiane not far frome Hadingtoun, to yat effect yat ye forme knawin, the moist pertiferus nature of ye said monsture may be moir easilie evitit; for yis monstre, being under coverture of a mannis figure, may easeliar endommage and wersid be eschapit than gif it wer moir deforme and strange of face, behaviour, schap, and memberis. Praying ye reidar to apardoun the febilnes of my waike spreit and engyne, gif

[1] *Vernacular Writings*, *ut sup.*, Pref. p. vi.

it can not expreme perfytelie ane strange creature maid be nature, other willing to schaw his greit strenth or be sum accident turnit be force frome ye commoun trade and course." [1]

But it is disappointing as it proceeds. The allegory is but ill sustained, and the piece is too closely packed with dates and facts, presented in a somewhat unattractive manner. It is upon his Latin, not upon his Scots, that the splendid edifice of Buchanan's fame must continue to rest, and we cannot do better in parting from him than cite the charitable judgment of Archbishop Spottiswoode: "His bitterness in writing of the Queen and troubles of the time all wise men have disliked. But otherwise, no man did merit better of his nation for learning, nor thereby did bring to it more glory." [2]

The leading controversialists on the side of the ancient modes of faith, worship, and church government may be somewhat more briefly disposed of. The ablest and most active of these was Ninian Winzet [3] (1518–92), a native of Renfrew, who, after being (in all probability) educated at Glasgow College, held the post of master of the Grammar School in the burgh of Linlithgow. While there, he is said to have engaged in a public disputation with Knox in 1559; but two years afterwards he was expelled from his office for refusing to accept the reformed version of the faith. Being now at leisure, he began to play a prominent part in the religious campaign, and in 1562 published in succession three *Tractats*, the chief feature of which is a challenge of the

[1] *Vernacular Writings*, p. 42.

[2] *History of the Church of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 300. We may compare the judgment of the *Edinburgh* reviewer (1755), probably Dr. Robertson himself, to the effect that "the force of Buchanan's numbers, the elegance of his manner, and the undaunted spirit of liberty he breathes, entitle him to be named with the most chosen spirits of Leo X.'s age, and reflect a splendour upon the rise of science in the North."

[3] *Certain Tractates*, and other works, ed. Hewison, S. T. S., 1888–90. See also the Maitland Club edition, ed. Laing, 1835.

validity of Protestant orders; a challenge which, though frequently repeated, was never taken up by Knox or any of his immediate followers. In the same year he produced *The Last Blast of the Trompet of Godis Word aganis the usurpit auctorite of Johne Knox*, the title of which, obviously suggested by the famous *First Blast*, sufficiently explains its character. This was more than flesh and blood could stand. The magistrates of Edinburgh—by this time staunch advocates of liberty of conscience—"raided" the printing office, seized the printer, and confiscated his property, Winzet himself contriving to slip through their fingers (*infra*, p. 161).

But he had made the country too hot to hold him, and he quitted Scotland for the Continent. In 1563 he published at Antwerp *The Buke of Four Scoir Thre Questions tueching Doctrine, Ordour and Maneris, proponit to the precheouris of the Protestants in Scotland*, which had already been circulated in manuscript in Edinburgh. In the same town and in the same year appeared his translation of the *Commonitorium* of Vincentius Lerinensis. Winzet presently found a harbour of refuge in the University of Paris, where he acted as proctor for the German "nation," and lectured on philosophy with great applause. He was in England in 1571 on the service of Queen Mary, and in 1574 he made a stay at the infant University of Douay. His exertions on behalf of the Church were finally rewarded in 1577, when the Pope made him, *per saltum*, Abbot of the Bendictine Monastery of St. James's, Ratisbon, an office which he held until his death in 1592. A *Flagellum Sectariorum* and a *Velitatio in Georgium Buchananum* (both 1582), the latter an attack upon the *De jure regni*, were among the productions of his pen while he presided over the House of an Order which has always been honourably distinguished for literary industry.

Winzet is not by any means free from the violence which has marked religious controversy in all ages, and not least in

the age of the Reformation. He has no hesitation in describing Knox as "cruentus ille cædium rebellionumque minister," and, again, as "cruentus seditionum architectus et pestis maxima." We see him "letting himself go" in the following extract :—

"Lat us turne, I say, and pray, *That the Lorde of the winezarde send us lauchfull treu workmen thairto, baith to schute oute the unclene baris*, quha be filthie leving and sueingeing in thair stinkeande styis infectis the tender burgeounis of the yong wynis : and to schut out or cut of alsua the wyld sangleris [boars = *sangliers*]—that is, the proude schismatikis and obstinat heretikis, na wayis sociale to the companie of Christiane Catholiks – quha, in hie arrogance of thair maister Lucifer, trampis down the heuinlie incres and all decent policie of the samyn winzarde, drest and deckit be the former workmen, unfenzeit policiaris [improvers] of the samin."[1]

But he does not emulate the mixture of unction and rancour which gives so remarkable a flavour to Knox's best controversial writing. Of Winzet it may be said that he was perhaps the most candid controversialist of his age on either side. With Knox, the supporters of the Reformation are all saints. Erskine of Dun, for example, he speaks of as one "whome God in these days had marvelouslie illuminated," and the only sign of that illumination that we know of is that in his youth he had killed a priest. James Melville (*infra* p. 163) also speaks of Erskine as "that notable instrument in the Kirk of Scotland." But while Winzet attacked the enemy hotly, he was frank enough to admit the shortcomings of the unreformed Church. He thus makes a valuable addition to the overwhelming consensus of testimony to the ignorance, inefficiency, and immorality of the pre-Reformation priesthood ; and, if he brings out one point more clearly than another, it is the loss of influence by those "dumb dogs," the parochial clergy, who had apparently for the most part ceased to preach at all. The familiar abuses are thus set forth in the following ironical passage :—

[1] From *The Last Blast*, in *Certain Tractates*, *ut sup.*, i. p. 45.

"And albeit the time be schort, sumthing of zour prais man we speik. But quhidder sal we begin zour commendation and louing at zour haly lyfes, or at zoure helthful doctrine, we ar doutsum. Sen zour godly leving garnisit with chastitie, fasting, prayer, and sobritie, be the worthi frutis thairof (what nedis mair) is patent to al man! Zour merchandrice, zour symonie, zour glorious estait, zour solicitute be mariage, efter to haif brocht the baronis to be impis of zour posteritie, and witnessing in all aiges to cum of zour godlines, quhay speiks not of it? Zour liberalitie to the pure, zour magnific collegeis of godly learnit in zour cumpanie, zour nurissing of pure studentis of ryche ingynis, able efter to reull the Kirk of God in helthful teachement, all cuntreis and collegis dois deplore! Zour godly and circumspect distributioun of benefices to zour babeis, ignorantis, and filthy anis [ones], al Ethnik, Turk and Jow may lauch at it, that being the special ground of al impietie and division this day within ye, O Scotland! Zour wyse, saige and grave familiar servands, void of al vanitie, bodily lustis, and heresie, ar spokin of to zour prayse, God wate! Zour dum doctrine in exalting ceremoneis only, without ony declaration of the samin, and, fer mair, keiping in silence the trew word of God, necessar to al manis salvation, and not resisting manifest errours, to the warld is knawin! Quhat part of the trew religion be zour sleuthful dominion and princelie estait is not corruptit or obscurit? Hes not mony, throw inlak of techement in mad ignorance, mysknawin their deuty, quhilk we al aucht to our Lord God, and sua in thair perfite beleif hes sairlye stummerit?"[1]

Winzet writes in the vernacular, and his prose is forcible, if not pretentious. Only once or twice does he rise to such a strain of eloquence as this :—

"Bot zit, O mercyful God, quhat deidly sleip is this that hes oppressit yow, that in sa gret uproir, tumult, and terrible clamour ze walkin nocht furth of zour dreme, and in sa gret dainger of deth, ze haif na regard of zour awin lyves nor utheris? Awalke! awalke! we say, and put to zour hande stowtlie to saif Petiris schip: for He nother slepis nor slummeris quha behaldis al zour doingis, and seis zoure thochtis, bot sall require the blude out of your handis of the smallaste ane that sall perise throw zour negligence."[2]

Half a dozen men with Winzet's boldness and command of

[1] From *The First Tractate*, in *Certain Tractates*, *ut sup.*, i. p. 4.
[2] From *The First Tractat*, in *Certain Tractates*, *ut sup.*, p. 6.

speech might perhaps have successfully rallied the drooping forces of "halie Kirk." But, with two or three honourable exceptions, the Churchmen of that generation were either too much appalled by the catastrophe which had overtaken them, or too well aware of the inherent badness of their case, to offer a sufficiently stout resistance in the pulpit or the press to the onslaught of the Reformers. We have seen two of these exceptions in John Hamilton and Winzet. Yet another was Quintine Kennedy (*circ.* 1520–64), the Abbot of Crossraguel, who held a public disputation with Knox in 1562, and whose *Compendius Tractive* (1558)[1] is an excellent specimen of sound Middle Scots prose. The like commendation may be bestowed upon what has come down to us of the work of David Fergusson[2] (1525–98), minister of Dunfermline, one of the most eminent of the Reformers of the second rank. His *Sermon* before the Regent and Nobility (1571), in which he emphasised the duty of giving an adequate maintenance to the reformed clergy, is admirably vigorous, and is quite one of the best examples of a class of literature soon to become a very large one. Fergusson contrasts favourably with the learned and pious Robert Rollock[3] (1555–99), the first Principal of the University of Edinburgh, whose *Lectures* on the Passion and the Resurrection are characteristic specimens of the minute and over-elaborate manner of expounding Holy Scripture which survived in the Reformed Kirk down to the last generation.

The tone of the Roman controversialists who became active at the time of the "counter-reformation"[4] is different from Winzeti. The most eminent of the band was James Tyrie

[1] *Wodrow Society Miscellany*, vol. i. (and last), 1844. The same interesting collection contains an *Answer* to the *Tractive* by John Davidson, "Maister of the Paedagog of Glasgw" (*i.e.*, Principal of Glasgow College), published in 1563.

[2] *Tracts*, ed. Laing and Lee, Bannatyne Club, 1860.

[3] *Select Works*, ed. Gunn, Wodrow Society, 1844.

[4] See *Catholic Tractates of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Law, S.T.S., 1901.

(1543–97), described by David Buchanan as "vir optimis naturæ dotibus præditus." A letter addressed by him to his brother had elicited an *Answer* from "Schir John Knox" himself in 1572. Of this *Answer*, Tyrie published a *Refutation* in Paris in 1573. John Hay (1546–1618) was the author of *Certaine Demandes concerning the Christian Religion* (1580), which was translated into French and German, and elicited answers from Protestant divines on the Continent. John Hamilton, who died prior to 1611, and who must not be confounded with the Hamilton of the *Catechism*, wrote *Ane Catholik and Facile Traictise* in 1581, which he supplemented with *Certane Orthodox and Catholik Conclusions*, and in 1600 brought forth another *Facile Traictise*, which professed to contain "ane infallible reul to discerne trew from fals religion." Whether it fulfilled this promise, it lies not within our province to determine. Nicol Burne, about the yeare 1580, suffered imprisonment and banishment for adhering to the tenets of Rome, and in 1581 produced *The Disputation concerning the controversit headdis of Religion*. Adam King, a professor of philosophy and mathematics in Paris, translated the *Catechism* of Peter Canisius, and prefixed to it a *Kallendar* (1588), which is not without interest for those skilled in such matters. Lastly, an unknown writer put together *Ane schort Catholik Confession* (*circ.* 1588), in answer to the *Negative Confession* compiled by John Craig (*circ.* 1512–1600), which had been printed in London in 1581; a circumstance which gave occasion for the revival of the old charge of Anglicising against the Protestants.[1]

All these works, as Mr. Law has pointed out, have in common a tendency to ignore the corruptions of the unreformed

[1] "Giff King James the fyft var alyve, quha hering ane of his subjectis knap suddrone, declarit him ane trateur: quhidder vald he declaire you triple traitoris, quha not onlie knappis suddrone in your negative confession, bot also hes causit it to be imprentit in London in contempt of our native language?" (Hamilton's *Catholik Traictise*, in *Catholic Tractates ut sup.* p. 105.)

Kirk, which, as we have seen, the older company of its champions were frank enough to admit. The later men prefer to carry the war into the enemy's country, and have no scruple in charging the protagonists of the reformed establishment with every species of iniquity. Knox was naturally a favourite object for such accusations, which, perhaps, reached the topmost pinnacle of calumny in Archibald Hamilton's *De confusione Calvinianæ Sectæ apud Scotos Ecclesiæ* (Paris, 1577). Nicol Burne was not far behindhand, and the gem of his *Disputation*, from the bibliographical point of view, is a set of unprintable verses which do him no credit. It is needless to say that the charges so indiscriminately preferred are in almost every case unsupported by a single atom of trustworthy evidence. As might naturally be expected, the treatises we have specified cover much the same ground in much the same way. If invidious distinctions are to be made, the later *Facile Traictise* of John Hamilton will probably be found to be the most vigorous, animated, and trenchant of the collection.

It is something of a relief to turn from all this chopping of theology to the works of writers who, partisans as they may have been, were yet not by any means absorbed in the ecclesiastical questions of the hour. In Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie (1532–78),[1] it will be generally conceded, Scotland produced her foremost historian in the vernacular. Our information with regard to Lindsay's life is of the most meagre description, but we do know that Pitscottie is the name of a farm in the neighbourhood of Cupar, and that the historian was a Fife man.

The *Historie and Cronicles of Scotland*[2] begins with the

[1] The dates commonly assigned are 1500–65, but I am disposed to accept at all events the date of death given by Mr. Mackay as above, there being no good reason to doubt that the continuation of the *History* from 1565 to 1575, first printed in the S. T. S. ed., is genuine.

[2] Ed. Mackay, S. T. S., 2 vols., 1899. Mr. Mackay had the satisfaction of introducing to the world the portion of the *Cronicles* which had been missing until its discovery by Mr. Scott, of Halkshill, after the purchase of a MS. at the Phillipps sale.

accession of James II. in 1437 and goes down to 1575. For the first twenty-three or twenty-four years it is merely a continuation of Bellenden's translation of Boece; from 1460 to the death of James V. in 1542 it is compiled from a number of authorities named by the author;[1] and from 1542 onwards it deals with events through which Pitscottie had himself lived, though doubtless he did not disdain such assistance as could be derived from the same sources of information. It must be confessed that, particularly in the matter of dates, his accuracy is not always unimpeachable, though the responsibility may rest with copyists and not with the author. But his chief merit consists in the artless and engaging manner in which he tells his tale. There is an easy flow in his narrative more pleasing and effective than any attempt at eloquence would probably have been; and no author narrates with greater gusto or to better purpose the well-known anecdotes with which the history of Scotland is so happily diversified. Thus, if he produces no impression of power such as the narrative of John Knox is so well calculated to give, he is very far from being insignificant or dull. He has a sense of humour and a shrewd cast of mind, which is unobtrusive but thoroughly serviceable. Let our first extract tell of the celebrated apparition to James IV. in Linlithgow—an occurrence for which Sir David Lyndsay vouches as an eye-witness:—

"At this tyme the king come to Lythtgow, quhair he hapnit for the tyme to be at consall, werie sad and dollarous, makand his devotioun to God to send him good chance and fortoun in his woage. In this mean tyme thair come ane man clade in ane blue goune in at the kirk doore witht ane roll of lynning claith, ane pair of bottouns on his feit to the great of his lege, witht all wther hose and claithis conforme thair to, bot he had nothing on his heid bot

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[1] These authorities include Patrick, Lord Lyndsay of the Byres, Sir William Scott of Balweary, Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, John Major, Sir David Lyndsay, Andrew Wood, the familiar servant of James V., Andrew Fernie of that ilk, and Sir William Bruce of Earlshall.

syde reid zallow hair behind and on his halffitis, quhilk wan doune to his schoulderis, bot his forheid was beld and bair. He semit ane man of lij zeiris, wytht ane great pyk staff in his hand, and come fast fordward amang the lordis cryand and speirand for the king, sayand he desirit to speik witht him; quhill at the last he come quhair the king was sittand in the dask at his prayeris. Bot quhene he saw the king he maid him lyttill reverence or sallutatioun, bot leinit doun groufflingis on the dask befoir him, and said to him in this maner as eftir followis :—'Schir king, my mother has send me to the desiring the nocht to pase at this tyme quhair thow art purposit, ffor gif thow dois thow wilt nocht fair weill in thy journay nor nane that passis witht thee; forther scho bad the nocht mell witht no wemen nor wse witht thair counsall, nor lat them nocht tuitch thy body nor thow thairs, for and thow do it thow wilbe confoundit and brocht to schame.' Be this man had spokin thir wordis in the kingis grace, the ewin song was neir done, and the king panssit on thir wordis studeing to gif him ane ansuer, bot in the meane tyme, befor the kingis face and in presentis of all his lordis that was about him for the tyme, this man wanischit away and could in no wayis be sen nor comprehendit, bot wanischit away as he had bene ane blink of the sone or ane quhipe of the whirle wind and could no more be seine." [1]

Here, too, is his account of the death of James V. :—

"Be this the post came out of Lythtgow schawing to the king goode tydingis that the quene was deliuerit. The king inquyrit 'wither it was man or woman.' The messenger said 'it was ane fair douchter.' The king ansuerit and said: 'Adew, fair weill, it come witht ane lase, it will pase witht ane lase.' And so he recommendit himself to the marcie of Almightie God, and spak ane lyttill then frome that tyme fourtht, bot turnit his bak into his lordis and his face into the wall. At this tyme Dawid Bettoun, cardienall of Scottland, standing in presentis of the king, seing him begin to faill of his strength and naturall speiche, held ane through of papir to his grace and caussit him subscryve the samin quhair the cardenall wrait that plessit him for his awin particular weill, thinkand to haue autorietie and prehemenence in the goverment of the countrie, bot we may knaw heirbe the kingis legacie was werie schort, ffor in this maner he depairtit as I sall zow tell. He turnit him bak and luikit and beheld all his lordis about him and gaiff ane lyttill smyle and

[1] From Pitscottie's *History*, ed. S. T. S., i. p. 258.

lauchter, syne kyssit his hand and offerit the samyn to all his lordis round about him, and thairefter held wpe his handis to God and zeildit [yielded] the spreit."[1]

There is no striving after pathos. Everything is simple and unaffected. Yet the passage is at once as touching and as dignified as such a passage ought by rights to be.

While the opinions of Pitscottie were those of the Reformers, John Leslye (1526–96), Bishop of Ross, was an active supporter of Queen Mary and of the old Church. He was much more a statesman and a man of affairs than Lindsay, but it may be doubted whether his *Historie of Scotland* has benefited from that circumstance. The first draft of the work[2] had been finished in Scots by about 1570, and the complete work, embracing the history of Scotland (with a most interesting survey of the country) down to 1436, in seven books, and the story of the period between 1436 and 1561 in three more, was published in Latin at Rome in 1578. This version was translated into Scots by Father James Dalrymple, of the monastery of Ratisbon, in 1596.[3] A continuation of the work down to 1571 is contained in a MS. in the Vatican, and was printed in Forbes-Leith's *Narratives of Scotch Catholics*.[4] It is unfortunate that Leslye chose to address the polite world of Europe rather than the mass of his countrymen. Yet Dalrymple's translation is by no means an uninteresting or despicable performance. On the contrary, the translator shows considerable command of language, and a decided literary gift. The flaw in his style is too close an adherence to the constructions of his original, and this he carries so far as to follow even the order of the words in Latin. Leslye's statements may not be always trustworthy, for his aim in writing the *Historie* was unquestionably political. But his intellectual powers were really considerable; he is not involved or ambiguous, and his sense of humour is as

[1] From Pitscottie's *History*, ed. S. T. S., i. p. 407.
[2] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1830.
[3] Ed. Cody and Murison, S. T. S., 1888–95.
[4] Edin., 1885.

keen as we have, so far, generally found it to be in Scottish writers. His account of the raiding of the printing office by the magistrates of Edinburgh is an excellent example of quiet fun :—

"This mater maid Mr. Ninian [Winzet] verie inviet with the haeretickis, and verie saire; quhairfore, quhen tha hard that he was busie with the prenter in setting furth a buik, quhairby he thocht to compleine of Knox to the Nobilitie for falsing his promis (be this onlie way, he thocht, he mycht prouoik thame til ansuer), thay consult to hinder his labour, to tak Mr. Ninian, to punise the printer. The magistrates with the suddartis [soldiers] brak in upon the prenter, the buikes that tha fand tha tuik. Johne Scot the prenter, quhen of al his gudes spoyled him tha had, tha cloised him in prisone; bot Mr. Ninian, quhom with sa gude wil tha wald haue had, mett the magistret in the yett, bot becaus tha knew him nocht tha mist him, and sa he chaiped [escaped]; the heretickis war wae, the Catholickis luiche."[1]

The following character of James V. is in a more serious vein, and stands in piquant contrast to Knox's terse description of that monarch already noted (*supra*, p. 142).

"This first he regairdet maist, that his table was nocht diligat and dilitious, as diligat personis requiret, nouther was he ouer skairs, narraw, or gredie. Gif his clathis was onything ornat, he studiet neuer to follow the fassoune of the Court or brauitie [bravery = splendour] of women. From pryd he was far, and sa far, that quha evir he saw gevin to this vice, he was ay in thair contrare, and ay offendet with thame. He was a manteiner of Justice, an executor of the lawis, a defender of the innocent and the pure [poor]. Quhairthrouch he was namet commounlie be his speciall nobilitie, the pure manis king. For the pure opprest with the potent he helpet ay, and the potent nocht spairing the indigence of the pure and nedie he ouirthrew, and that with gret seueritie. Althoch in this seueritie mycht ay be seine in him a meruellous benignitie, quha put not out, albeit he mycht, the lyfe of offendaris, bot spairing thair lyfe, outher put thame in prissoune, or tuke a soume of money fra thame, that way punissing thame. Ffor neuer man, tha say, he put

[1] *The Historie of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 467.

doune, or fra him tuke his lyfe, bot to manteine justice, or to mak wicket persounes an exemple to the gude; this cheiflie he wrocht amang thame to mitigat thair crueltie, stanche thair hardines, and baldnes quha keipet the bordouris and war wardanis. This way quhen he diet, his Realme he left ryche, the Treasure nocht tume [empty] and bair of money, bot meruelloslie instoret with gold, siluer, and otheris thingis: that na man neides to meruel, quhen he was tane frome thame, to be, nocht as a king fra subjectes, bot as clientis fra thair patroune, or barnes fra thair father. Quhilk in thair lamentatioune mycht be seine, when with teiris infinit they lamented him, as al man mycht sie at his departing, and at his burial, as said is."[1]

Both extracts fully display the fault of style to which reference has been made.

Certain prose works which possess either a literary or an historical value, or both, fall next to be mentioned. *The Historie and Cronikle of the House and Surname of Seytoun*[2] (1561), by Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington (*infra*, p. 201), is pleasing enough for other reasons than its brevity, but cannot be described as of capital importance. *The Memoriale of Transactions in Scotland*[3] (1569–73), compiled by Richard Bannatyne (*d.* 1605), Knox's secretary, is the work of a faithful, but far from brilliant, hack. The *Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents*[4] (1513–75), kept by an anonymous author, is more intelligent, though it is simply a businesslike and straightforward narrative of facts arranged in chronological order. Here is the account it gives of the "putting away" of Darnley:—

"Upoun the tent day of Februar, at twa houris befoir none in the mornyng, thair come certane tratouris to the said proveistis hous, quhairin wes our soueranis husbane Henrie, and ane seruand of his, callit Williame Tailzeour, liand in thair naikit beddis; and thair

[1] *Historie of Scotland, ut sup.*, ii. p. 261. [2] Ed. Maitland Club, 1829.
[3] Ed. Dalyell, 1806; ed. Pitcairn for Bannatyne Club, 1836.
[4] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1833.

privilie, with wrang keyis opnit the durres, and come in upoun the said prince, and thair without mercie wyrreit him and his said seruand in thair beddis; and thairefter tuke him and his seruand furth of that hous, and keist him naikit in ane yaird beyond the theif raw, and syne come to the hous agane and blew the hous in the air, swa that thair remanit nocht ane stane upoun ane uther undistroyit. This tressoun wes of long tyme befoir conspirit, and that be the quenis maist familiars; and becaus it should have bene the less suspectit, thaj blew the said hous in the air, to caus the pepill understand that it wes ane suddane fyre. And at fyve houris the said day, the said prince and his seruand wes fundin lying deid in the said yaird, and was tane into ane house in the Kirk of feild, and laid quhill thaj war burijt."[1]

Of greater moment than any of these productions are the *Memorials* of Sir James Melville of Hallhill[2] (1535–1617), which cover the period between 1549 and 1593. Melville played a part in the events of his time sufficiently noteworthy, though scarcely so conspicuous as he himself supposed; and his work, which is written with enjoyment and animation, shows every indication of a penetrating intellect and an observant eye. Even better than these *Memorials*, however, is the *Diary*[3] of his namesake, "Mr."[4] James Melville (1556–1614), nephew of Andrew Melville, the champion of Presbytery; minister of Kilrenny, and Professor of Oriental Languages at St. Andrews. The *Diary*, which runs from 1556 to 1601, has been justly characterised as "one of the most delightful books of its kind in the language,"[5] and no one can dip into its pages without becoming conscious that he is being brought face to face with a singularly attractive personality. Melville's Scots is racy, vigorous, and idiomatic, and it is to him that we owe the famous description of John Knox at St. Andrews, which may once more be reproduced:—

[1] From *A Diurnal of Occurrents*, *p.* 105.

[2] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1827. [3] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1829.

[4] This, the technical designation of the Scots clergy, has, I fear, been almost wholly superseded by the commonplace and insipid "Reverend," except, perhaps, in the official documents of the Church Courts.

[5] Hume Brown, *John Knox*, *ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 267.

"Bot of all the benefites I haid that yeir was the coming of that maist notable profet and apostle of our nation, Mr. Jhone Knox to St. Andros, wha, be the faction of the Quein occupeing the castell and town of Edinbruche, was compellit to remove therefra with a number of the best, and chusit to com to St. Andros. I hard him teatche ther the prophecie of Daniel that simmer and the wintar following. I haid my pen and my litle book, and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening upe of his text he was moderat the space of an halff houre; bot when he enterit to application, he maid me sa to grew and tremble, that I could nocht hald a pen to wryt. . . . Mr. Knox wald sum tyme com in and repose him in our colleage yeard, and call us schollars unto him, and bless us, and exhort us to knaw God and his wark in our contrey, and stand be the guid causes, to use our tyme weill, and lern the guid instructione, and follow the guid exemple of our maisters. . . . I saw him everie day of his doctrine go hulie and fear [warily], with a furring of martriks about his neck, a staff in the an hand, and guid godly Richart Ballanden his seruand haldin upe the uther oxter, from the Abbay to the paroche Kirk, and be the said Richart and another seruant lifted upe to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie, bot, or [before] he had done with his sermon, he was sa actiue and vigorus, that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads and flie out of it."[1]

This chapter may be fitly concluded with a glance at the writings of King James VI., "the only English Prince who has carried to the throne knowledge derived from reading, or any considerable amount of literature."[2] Waiving the question of what service that knowledge and that stock of literature were to him in discharging the duties of his exalted station, we must admit that the Scottish Solomon had had a great deal of learning flogged into him by Buchanan, and that, while the natural talents of a shrewd though narrow mind

[1] From James Melville's *Diary*, *ut sup.*, pp. 20, 21, 26. No accessible edition of this work, so far as I am aware, exists; and I may, therefore, be excused for pointing such as desire a little to extend their acquaintance with this interesting author, to Henley and Whibley's *Book of English Prose*, 1894, p. 107; Craik's *English Prose*, vol. i. p. 505; and *Chambers's Cyclopædia of Literature*, 1901, vol. i. p. 229.

[2] Mark Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, p. 296.

were thoroughly misdirected, they may have been sharpened rather than blunted by the training he had undergone.

James wrote poetry as well as prose, and his first published effort was *The Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie* (1584),[1] a work whose chief interest lies less in the "Essayes" themselves than in the *Schort Treatise* in prose by which they are prefaced. This introduction bears to contain "some reulis and cautelis to be observit and eschewit in Scottis poesie," though the author professes to be no believer in the efficacy of such canons. "Gif Nature be nocht the cheif worker in this airt," he wisely observes, "Reulis wilbe bot a band to Nature, and will mak you within short space weary of the haill art; whairas, gif Nature be cheif, and bent to it, reulis will be ane help and staff to Nature." He begins by teaching shortly the laws of "ryming, fete, and flowing." Never rhyme twice on the same syllable; beware of inserting long words "hinmest in the lyne," and so forth. In all matters of short and long "your eare man be the onely judge, as of all other parts of flowing, the verie twichestane whairof is musique."[2]

He goes on to treat of vocabulary, and recommends the tyro to "waill" his words according to the purpose. If his purpose be of love, he shall use "commoun language, with some passionate wordis," if his purpose be of landward affairs, he shall use "corruptit and uplandis wordis." In fine, whatever the subject, the poet must use *vocabula artis*, "whairby ye

[1] The collected edition of King James's *Works* is the folio of 1616. The *Counterblast* and other pieces figure in Mr. Arber's series of reprints; and a convenient little volume (ed. Rait, 1900), contains the *Treatise*, the *Essayes*, and the *Counterblast*, together with an excellent introduction.

[2] James recanted this sound doctrine in the *Basilikon Doron*, where he bids Prince Henry remember that "it is not the principall part of a poeme to rime right, and flow well with many pretie wordes: but the chief commendation of a poem is, that when the verse shall be shaken sundrie in prose, it shall bee found so rich in quick inventions and poetic flowers, and in faire and pertinent comparisons, as it shall retaine the lustre of a Poeme although in prose." This appears to be the old fallacy of identifying poetry with "rethorique."

may the mair vivelie represent that persoun whais pairt ye paint out." He next urges the use, as far as possible, of alliteration, especially "in Tumbling verse for flyting," and touches on three special ornaments, namely, comparisons, epithets, and proverbs. He warns his reader against treating his themes in a hackneyed manner (see *supra*, p. 81, *n.*) and enjoins variety. If you *must* say something about the sunrise, "tak heid, that what name ye giue to the Sunne, the Mone, or uther starris, the ane tyme, gif ye happin to wryte thairof another tyme, to change thair names." If you call the sun *Titan* at one time, call him *Phœbus* or *Apollo* the next. Invention should be cultivated, and it is best for a poet not to compose of "sene subjects," nor to translate. Also, he should "be war of wryting any thing of materis of commoun weill, or uther sic graue sene subjectis, because nocht onely ye essay nocht your awin Inventioun, as I spak before, but lykewayis they are too graue materis for a poet to mell in." Here, we may conjecture, is the voice of the youthful king himself, and not merely his preceptor's. The *Treatise*, which is really "schort," as it professes to be, closes with a chapter, which we could have wished longer, on different kinds of verse, with illustrations from the Scots poets. To say that the piece as a whole has much substantive value would be to say too much. It is necessarily immature, for the author was at most seventeen when he wrote it. But it presents some points of interest; it doubtless gives expression to many of the ideas of criticism current at the time; and it is not destitute of insight or acuteness. When Queen Elizabeth enquired of Sir James Melville whether her cousin Queen Mary played well on the lute and virginals, that diplomatic courtier replied that she played "reasonably for a Queen." We may apply the saying to Queen Mary's son in respect of his literary criticism, wherein he owes a good deal to Gascoigne.

Nothing, indeed, that James wrote is wholly without merit of some sort. But his remaining works need not detain us

long. His dialogue on *Dæmonologie* (1597) shows him in full agreement with the sternest sort of Presbyterian divines, who were zealous in obtempering the Mosaic prohibition against suffering a witch to live. But in the *Basilikon Doron* (1599) we see his not unnatural dislike to Presbytery in full vigour, though he was unable to give effect to it in practice until after his accession to the throne of England. From that date, whatever he wrote (and he had a strong taste for theological and political controversy) was written in English, not in Scots, and therefore, though the celebrated *Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604) must be mentioned, no extract is presented from what is a highly entertaining, and by no means ill-composed pamphlet.[1] With the close of the sixteenth century it may be said that the use of the distinctively Scots tongue for the ordinary purposes of literary prose practically ceased. This result, as we have shown, was largely brought about by the facts that the reforming party in Scotland had been closely associated with the reforming party in England, and that the service books and the versions of the Scriptures which circulated in Scotland were from an English pen. Such an event as the union of the Crowns was well fitted to put the finishing stroke to a process which had been in operation for half a century, nor was there anything in the history of the seventeenth century that tended to promote the rehabilitation of the national dialect. The object of the Royalist party in England was to establish Episcopacy in Scotland, the object of the Covenanters in Scotland was to force Presbyterianism upon England. Everything thus made for the use of a common and identical literary medium of expression. If any one was burning to give utterance to some private revelation of religious or political truth, he no

[1] A counter counterblast was published ten years later (Edin., 1614), by William Barclay, M.D. (b. 1570, d. ?), entitled *Nepenthes or The Vertues of Tabacco*. It is worth looking at for those to whom the *Miscellany* of the Spalding Club, 1841 (vol. i. p. 257) is available.

longer wrote (unless by way of jest, or as a *tour de force*) in Scots, but in the best English he could muster. It is true that it was not until after the Union of the Parliaments that a conscious and concerted effort was made to purge Scottish prose from every trace of the vernacular idiom. But its presence in written speech, though unmistakable, and at times obtrusive, had for long before been accidental and precarious, rather than natural and inevitable; and we have now reached a point at which we are justified in saying of true Scots prose, in the dying words of David Beaton, "Fy! fy! All is gone."

CHAPTER IV

THE VERSE OF THE REFORMATION: THE BALLADS: THE LAST OF THE "MAKARIS"

THE preceding chapter has proved to us that the members of the Reforming party were, upon the whole, rather more disposed than their adversaries during the earlier years of the Reformation to appeal through the medium of the press to the general public of Scotland. If this be true of set treatises on theological or historical topics—of what we may call "full-dress" polemics—it is even more true of the ephemeral forms of literature which poured from the printing offices during the latter half of the sixteenth century. In the course of that period, as Mr. Cranstoun tells us,[1] "the country was literally deluged with ballads containing rough-and-ready pictures of passing events; circumstantial details of deeds of darkness; satirical effusions directed against those who, from their position or abilities, took a prominent part in affairs secular or sacred; and in some cases ebullitions of spite and rancour and personal abuse." A few of such broadsides have by good fortune been preserved,[2] and of these few only a very small proportion are not on the Reformers' side.

[1] Introduction to *Satirical Poems, ut infra*, p. ix.

[2] They are all collected in Cranstoun's *Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation*, S. T. S., 2 vols., 1891–93. For what is known of Robert Lekpreuik, who printed most of them, and a great deal else of Reformation literature, see Dickson and Edmond's *Annals of Scottish Printing*, Cambridge, 1890.

The collection, as a whole, displays a fair command of the arts of rhyme and metre, and there is no want of variety in the styles essayed by the several authors. An elaborate piece of alliterative rhyme, entitled *Aganis Sklanderous Tungis*, is from the pen of the second son of Sir Richard Maitland, of Lethington, and shall be quoted from hereafter (*infra*, p. 206). Sir William Kirkaldy, of Grange, who had been one of Beaton's murderers, and who was hanged in 1573 for having espoused the cause of Mary, contributes *Ane ballat of the Captane of the Castell* in the elaborate measure of *The Cherry and the Slae* (*infra*, p. 216), to cope with which his powers were barely adequate. Nicol Burne, or some other champion of the unreformed Church, makes a spirited attack in the *Lewd Ballet* (aptly enough named) on the morals of the Protestant clergy. One or two cases, like that of Paul Methven, once a baker in Dundee, and afterwards a preacher until his deposition, gave him a handle of which he made vigorous use. In long fourteens he charges the Reformed ministers with immorality even more glaring and unabashed than that of their predecessors in office :—

"The subject now commandis the Prince and Knox is grown a King;
Quhat he willis obeyd is, that maid the Bishop hing"—

and so on. His numbers are fluent and tripping enough, but the rest of his pasquinade must remain unquoted here.

The most powerful among the versifiers whose scanty remains have thus been gathered together is unquestionably Robert Sempill (1530–95),[1] of whom little that is certain is known save that he was *not* Robert, the fourth Lord of that name. He is extraordinarily coarse, violent, and brutal; no touch of humanity or good humour relieves his habitual squalor; and yet there is a rude and persistent vigour in his work which raises it above the level of the average ballad-

[1] In addition to Mr. Cranstoun's anthology, see *The Sempill Ballates*, ed. Stevenson, Edin., 1872.

monger. *Johnet Reid, Ane Violet, and Ane Quhyt*, and *The Defence of Crissell Sandelands* are disgraceful enough, while *Margret Fleming* comes near to being infamous. Nevertheless a substantial degree of merit can scarcely be denied to the author of the *Complaint upon Fortune*, a poem in *ab ab bc bc*, whose homely strength is well displayed in the following quatrain :—

> "Sa fortun mountit neuer man sa hie
> Fostered with folie, suppose she make them faine,
> Bot with one tit sho turnis the quheill ye sie,
> Doun gois their heid, up gois their heillis agane."

His most remarkable, as it is his longest, piece is the *Legend of the Lymmaris Lyfe* (1584), a furious assault upon Patrick Adamson, Archbishop of St. Andrews, the *bête noire* of the stalwart Presbyterian section in the Kirk of Scotland, and probably a man of no very high character, though of unquestionable ability. The following lines from the Preface to the *Legend* (in *ab ab bc bc*) will show the spirit in which Sempill attacked him, as the champion of the maimed system of Episcopacy which then prevailed in the Scottish Church—the representative of the "Pestiferous Prelates that Papistrie pretendis" :—

> "Judas Iscariot for a gleib of geir
> Betrayed his master like a traytor tod ;
> Annas and Caiaphas, gif they both was heir,
> Could doe no mair to slea the sanctis of God ;"

and again—

> "Albeit they now be Tulchin bischops stylit,
> Having proude kingis and counsallis to decoir them,
> Auld God is God and will not be begyllit,
> When Pluto's palice beis provydit for them."

The main body of the performance itself, which is in octosyllabics, heaps its victim with the most miscellaneous and indiscriminate accusations. Adamson is rich ; he fleeces

the poor by means of "double tacks" [leases], &c., &c.; yet he can get nothing in the town of St. Andrews except for ready money, and he "ran" his embassy to England on the most paltry scale. He "bilked" all the tradesmen on his way to London by promising payment on the return journey, and then coming home by a different route. In the English capital he carried his Scots manners to Whitehall, "which is a thing inhibit thair," and failed to tip the Archbishop of Canterbury's porter at Lambeth Palace. He is a systematic practitioner of witchcraft, and lets off all witches who are brought before him for trial. It is unnecessary to proceed with the recapitulation of Adamson's offences. We rise from the poem as favourably disposed to the object of its attack as we feel towards those whom Churchill or Junius selects as his prey. Individual passages may be spirited and amusing; but considered as a whole the *Legend* overshoots its mark, for the author's talent is incommensurate with his zeal. A satirist is none the worse for having a bad temper, but mere venom, though a great help, will not always supply a deficiency of brains or literary skill.

The most remarkable of the popular lyrics connected with the Reformation are those contained in *Ane compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs*,[1] more familiarly known as *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*. The authorship of this curious work is attributed mainly to three brothers, James, John, and Robert Wedderburn, of Dundee, who flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century, who were all alumni of St. Andrews, and to whom (especially to John) had been vouchsafed what their latest editor terms an "invaluable gift of poesy." The collection would appear to have existed in some form or other in the fifth decade of the century. It is certain that metrical psalms were in use among the adherents of the new movement, and George Wishart is stated to have sung one on the night of his apprehension. But of this early

[1] Ed. Laing, 1868; ed. Mitchell, S. T. S., 1897.

edition no traces remain ; and the first one with which we are acquainted is that of 1567, so fortunately recovered through the sagacity and good fortune of Professor Mitchell, and reproduced by him for the Scottish Text Society.

The *Compendious Booke* opens (after a Kalendar) with the Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of the Institution of the Sacraments. These are followed by a somewhat amplified version in metre, which, from the literary point of view, presents no striking feature of interest. As regards doctrine, it may be noted that the teaching of the Reformation is presented in all its purity, uncontaminated by Lutheran eccentricities, or by any hint of the innovations dear to the English sectaries of the succeeding century. The festival of Christmas is not "burked," and the doctrine of the sacraments is of that distinctively "high" type which has ever been characteristic of the reformed Kirk of Scotland in her happiest moments. The object of the authors was, doubtless, as Dr. Mitchell tells us, "to quicken to purer faith and higher life," by setting forth "with fond affection and winning simplicity the great truths of the Gospel." We may think that some of the methods pursued by the compilers towards this laudable end were not very felicitously chosen, but there is no reason to doubt that the result of their labours was long "treasured in the hearts of the people."

The Catechism portion of the book concluded, we come to a number of sacred lyrics, most of them translations from the German ; and it is to Germany that the *Ballatis* owe, perhaps, their heaviest debt. The idea of such a collection was by no means original. The Reformed Churches of Germany, Sweden, and France had been beforehand with the Church of Scotland in providing material for their people to sing, and it need not be said what a remarkable and important addition to the literature of the first-named country was supplied by the Lutheran hymns. The Wedderburn translations rarely

if ever attain the magnificent effects compassed by their originals. But they surpass Coverdale's *Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songes*, an analogous work, the precise relation of which to the *Compendious Booke* still remains something of a mystery. The metres employed are not lacking in variety, and the two following stanzas exhibit the application to sacred themes of a measure with which every one is familiar in another context :—

> "Rycht sorelie musing in my mynde,
> For pitie sore my hart is pynde,
> Quhen I remember on Christ sa kynde,
> That sauit me :
> Nane culd me saif, from thyne till Ynde,
> Bot onlie hie.
>
> He is the way, trothe, lyfe, and lycht
> The varray port till heaven full rycht.
> Quha enteris nocht be his greet mycht
> Ane theif is he :
> That wald presume, be his awin mycht
> Sauit to be."[1]

Passing over the metrical versions of various psalms which compose the next section of the volume, and of which it must suffice to say that suitability for singing does not at first sight strike the reader as being their most prominent quality, we come to the last, and by far the most interesting, portion of the contents. The Roman Church had, on the recurrence or certain seasons, allowed the tunes appropriated to the most solemn hymns to be used in conjunction with words which were undoubtedly secular, and often disreputable and profane. On these occasions the parish church was turned into the scene of a rather risky "soiree," and the service of the Church was parodied in a far from reverent manner for the entertainment of the audience. The Reformers sought

[1] *Ane Compendious Booke*, ed. Mitchell, *ut sup.*, p. 61. This piece appears to be original, but a song with the same opening words is mentioned in *The Complaynt of Scotland*.

to improve upon this custom by the converse process of wedding devotional or religious language to popular airs, and it must be owned that nothing probably could have been better calculated to secure the dissemination of their principles among the masses. The device has always been popular with the founders of religious sects, though its efficacy at the present day is open to considerable doubt. What contributed to its success in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* was the strong tincture of humour and satire which the authors occasionally contrived to infuse into their rhymes. While a mere hymn set to a secular tune would have been a feeble instrument for conversion or edification, the combination of hymn with pasquinade might well prove irresistible, and the faint suggestion of the profane or illicit so dear to a certain type of religious mind could not fail to stimulate curiosity. It is certainly the daring employment of what we may fairly call parody or burlesque that engages and detains our interest in those singular compositions.

Take, for example, the spirited lyric, *With huntis up.*

"With huntis up, with huntis up,
It is now perfite day,
Jesus, our King, is gaine in hunting,
Quha lykis to speid thay may.

Ane cursit Fox lay hid in rox,
This lang and mony ane day,
Deuoring scheip, quhill he mycht creip,
Nane mycht him schaip away.

It did him gude to laip the blude
Of zung and tender lambis,
Nane culd he mis, for all was his,
The zung ains, with thair dammis.

The hunter is Christ, that huntis in haist,
The hundis ar Peter and Paull,
The Paip is the Fox, Rome is the rox,
That rubbis us on the gall."[1]

[1] *Ane Compendious Booke, ut sup.*, p. 174.

An excellent spiritual song for a revivalist meeting; but not more inspiriting than several others in the anthology. What does the reader say to this?

"Johne cum kis me now,
Johne cum kis me now,
Johne cum kis me by and by,
And mak no moir adow.
The Lord thy God I am,
That Johne dois thé call;
Johne representit man,
Be grace celestiall;
For Johne Goddis grace it is
(Quha list till expone the same);
Oh, Johne, thow did amiss,
Quhen that thow loste his name;"[1]

or to this?

"For our gude man in heuin dois regne,
In gloire and blis without ending,
Quhair Angellis singis euer *Osan*
In laude and pryse of our gude man.
Till our gud man, till our gud man
Keip faith and lufe till our gud man;"[2]

or to this?

"Quho is at my windo, quho, quho?
Go from my windo, go, go.
Quha callis thair sa lyke ane stranger?
Go from my windo, go.

Lord I am heir ane wratcheid mortall
That for thy mercy dois cry and call
Unto thé my Lord Celestiall,
Se quho is at my windo, quho."[3]

Neither, as may be imagined, are instances wanting of songs or ballads which were obviously written of an earthly, being adapted to meet the case of a heavenly, love.[4]

[1] *Ane Compendious Booke, ut sup.*, p. 158.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 198. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[4] The songs mentioned in *The Complaynt of Scotland*, which are parodied in the *Compendious Booke*, will be found on reference to the appendix to this Chapter.

"Downe be yon Riuer I ran,
Downe be yon Riuer I ran,
Thinkand on Christ sa fré,
That brocht me to libertie
And I ane sinful man.

"Quha suld be my lufe bot he,
That hes onlie sauit me,
And be his deith me wan," &c.[1]

and—

"All my lufe, leif me not,
Leif me not, leif me not,
All my lufe, leif me not,
This myne allone;
With ane burding on my bak,
I may not beir it, I am sa waik,
Lufe, this burding fra me tak,
Or ellis I am gone;"[2]

both tell the same tale, and all that can be said is that the adaptations are decidedly less offensive than anything of the same sort in modern hymnology. By a curious accident we are presented in one instance with both original and parody. The last piece in the edition of 1567 is *Welcum Fortoun, welcum againe*,[3] which makes no pretence of being religious, and is in fact a love-poem of very considerable merit and unimpeachable decency. Earlier in the book will be found the spiritual version which follows the other tolerably closely.[4] By what oversight the former verses obtained admittance to the pages

[1] *Compendious Booke, ut sup.*, p. 168.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[3] "Welcum, Fortoun, welcum againe,
The day and hour I may weill bless,
Thou hes exilit all my paine,
Quhilk to my hart greit plesour is."
Ibid., p. 222.

[4] "Welcum, Lord Christ, welcum againe,
My joy, my comfort, and my bliss,
That culd me saif from hellis paine,
Bot onlie thow nane was nor is."
Ibid., p. 171.

of the collection it is vain to conjecture. It is possible that printers were as sportive in those days as they are alleged sometimes to be now. In any event, the General Assembly took cognisance of the mistake in 1568, and ordained the offending poem to be deleted from the Book : a command which was duly obeyed.

It need scarcely be said that the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* utter no uncertain sound as to the corruptions of the unreformed Church. The greed and immorality of the clergy are vigorously scourged, and a return to the order and discipline of the primitive Church is advocated.

> "God send euerie Priest ane wyfe,
> And euerie Nunne ane man,
> That thay mycht leue that haly lyfe
> At first the Kirk began.
>
> Sanct Peter quhome nane can reprufe
> His lyfe in mariage led ;
> All guide Preistis, quhome God did lufe
> Thai maryit wyffis had."[1]

Such is the very sensible aspiration of the authors—perhaps we may say of Robert Wedderburn, the Vicar of Dundee, who, in common with the majority of his professional brethren, had endeavoured to anticipate the arrival of this happy state of matters by forming a connection with a female, who bore him two sons, and who indeed has by some been supposed to be no other than the heroine of the *Fortoun* poem.

The gem of the *Ballatis*, however, is a lyric[2] which Dr. Mitchell deliberately mutilated in his edition, and of which we present here so much as is presentable :—

> "The Paip, that Pagane full of pryde,
> He hes us blindit lang,
> For quhair the blind the blind dois gyde
> Na wounder baith ga wrang ;

[1] *Compendious Booke, ut sup.*, p. 188.

[2] It is introduced with excellent effect into *The Abbot*, ch. xv.

Lyke Prince and King he led the Regne
Of all iniquitie :
Hay trix, tryme go trix, under the grene wod tre.

Bot his abominatioun
The Lord hes brocht to lycht ;
His Popisch pryde and thrinfald Crowne
Almaist hes loste thair mycht.
His plak Pardonis ar bot lardonis
Of new fund vanitie :
Hay trix, &c.

His Cardinallis hes cause to murne,
His Bischoppis borne aback,
His Abbotis gat ane uncouth turne,
Quhen schavelingis went to sack,
With Burges wyffis thay led thair lyves,
And fure better nor we :
Hay trix, &c.

His Carmelitis and Jacobinis,
His Dominikis had greit do,
His Cordeleris and Augustinis,
Sanct Frances ordour to ;
Thay sillie Freiris mony zeiris
With babling blerit our Ee :
Hay trix, &c.

. . . . . .

The blind Bischop, he culd notcht preiche,
For playing with the lassis,
The sillie Freir behulffit to fleiche
For almous that he assis [begs],
The Curat his Creid he culd nocht reid,
Schame fall the cumpanie ;
Hay trix, &c.

. . . . . .

Of lait I saw thir lymmaris stand
Lyke mad men at mischeif,
Thinking to get the upper hand,
Thay luke efter releif.
Bot all in vaine, go tell them plaine,
That day will never be :
Hay trix, &c.

O Jesu ! gif thay thocht greit glie
To se Goddis word downe smorit,
The Congregatioun maid to flie,
Hypocrisie restorit,
With messis sung and bellis rung,
To thair Idolatrie ;
Marie, God thank zow, we sall gar brank zow,
Befoir that tyme trewlie." [1]

The note is that, not merely of militant, but, of triumphant Protestantism, and the piece, whose origin has not been traced, may pretty safely be assigned to the years immediately succeeding 1560. It practically announces the victory of the new movement in Scotland, and even the modern upholders of the old faith must surely acknowledge that in its high spirits and vigour—even in its coarseness and brutality—there is a strong tincture of the masterfulness which enabled Knox to prevail in his struggle with "principalities and powers." Whether it is the utterance of a typical Christian is, of course, a totally different matter. The "fond affection," the "winning simplicity," the "deep and yearning tenderness," which Dr. Mitchell attributes to the book as a whole, are certainly not very conspicuous here. But, regarded from the literary standpoint, the performance is an admirable popular broadside, which has the great merits of being violent, and of "singing itself" even in the ears of the most unmusical. With what thunders of applause would it be received in any gathering of the faithful ! We have seen that the supreme Court of the reformed Kirk was fastidious. But it never allowed fastidiousness to override policy and discretion. *Welcum, Fortoun*, was proscribed : *The Paip, that Pagan full of Pride*, was wisely ignored. To proscribe *him*, might have been to weaken the security of the treasure-house occupied by the *Ballatis* in "the hearts of the people." Here, if anywhere in the *Compendious Booke*, do we get the *echt volksthümlich*, the true "communal" touch, as the phrase goes.

[1] *Compendious Booke, ut sup.*, p. 204.

This brings us face to face with the "problem" of the Ballads (if problem indeed there be), and, having thus far carefully staved it off, we may shirk its consideration no longer.[1] It presents questions on which critics have for long differed, and still differ; questions, too, to which a definite and categorical answer is often impossible. The problem cannot be adequately discussed without overstepping the bounds of purely Scottish literature; but we shall endeavour, in sketching the attitude of the contending factions, to restrict our divagations within as narrow limits as possible.

Broadly speaking, the critics of ballad literature may be divided into those who maintain that the ballad (in which term the traditional lyrical, as well as narrative, poem may be included) is an extremely ancient form, and those who maintain that it is comparatively modern. The former school, or at least the more reasonable section thereof, does not, as I understand, contend that this or that ballad as we now possess it is the specific work which came into existence many centuries ago. The contention rather is that the ballad, generically speaking, may be traced to an age in which, as it were, every man was his own minstrel, and that the indications of this descent, however obscured by the accidents resulting from oral

[1] Among innumerable authorities on the Ballad question, consult Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 3 vols., 1802–3, introduction; the same author's "Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry," and "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad" in the 1833 edition of that work; all reprinted, with a Prefatory Note by the editor, in Mr. T. F. Henderson's admirable edition of the *Minstrelsy*, 4 vols., Edin., 1902; Mr. A. Lang in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Ballads" (1875); the same author *apud Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature*, vol. i., 1901, pp. 520–41; Mr. T. F. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Literature, ut sup.*, Chapter XI.; Mr. G. Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, Chapter VI., which gives a very clear and instructive survey of the subject; and Professor F. B. Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry*, New York, 1901. As regards editions of the Ballads themselves, by far the greatest is that of the late Professor F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols., Boston, U.S., 1882–98. I have here generally referred to Mr. Henderson's edition of Scott's *Minstrelsy, ut sup.* Aytoun's *Ballads of Scotland*, 2 vols., Edin., 1858, is convenient and good. See also *infra*, p. 386, *n.*

transmission, or by the deliberate "faking" of modern editors, are still perceptible, in the versions we know, to the sympathetic mind.

The most recent and, at first sight, most formidable champion of the "communal" theory of the origin of ballads—the theory that "the ballad has in it elements which go back to certain conditions of poetic production utterly unknown to the modern poem of art"—is Professor Gummere.[1] With an enviable air of certainty which brooks no opposition, he lays down the most sweeping general propositions, and these he illustrates by innumerable instances drawn from a wide range of reading and set forth with plenty of quasi-scientific jargon about "curves of evolution," and "differencing elements," and the "centrifugal tendency" in morals. Instructive and entertaining as these examples are, they rarely prove what they are adduced to demonstrate. But what matter? The blessed word "communal" remains, and its magic properties act as a solvent for every puzzle. To state Mr. Gummere's view at once briefly and intelligibly is not very easy, but it appears to come to this, as expounded at length in his fifth chapter, that in the course of tribal, or communal, dancing and singing, the ballad somehow or other glided into being. It sprang in a mysterious manner from the heart, or the throat, or the legs, of the "people"; and no one individual could lay claim to its authorship. It was then "popular" as opposed to "literary," "communal" as opposed to "artistic." It is doubtless unfortunate that no pure specimen of a form of utterance which "growed" in so remarkable a manner should have reached us. But there are abundant traces of it in the ballads and lyrics which have been preserved. The faulty rhymes, the constant repetitions, the recurrence of numbers like "three" and "seven," all these symptoms, it is urged, point to a state of primitive culture in which deliberate Art was impossible. Above all, there are a tone and ἦθος about

[1] *Beginnings of Poetry, ut sup.* p. 163.

the ballad which stamp it as essentially the work of the community. The genuine ballad was a superior production. We must not confound it with broadsides vended in the streets. These are "sharply sundered from the good old songs,"[1] which in essence were decent and respectable. Moreover, the "communal" character of the ballad is further demonstrated (it is said) by the fact that the making of the ballad has been practically "a closed account," since the invention of printing, or at least since the diffusion of the arts of reading and writing. "The revival of learning broke up the communal ballad";[2] and thenceforth no one has been able to reproduce—or even perhaps to counterfeit with complete success—the genuine article.[3]

Such is the celebrated "communal" theory of the origin of a certain species of poetry. On the mere ground of probability it is far from convincing; and in so obscure a region probability is perhaps the most that can fairly be sought for. It appears to me as difficult to hold that so artificial a thing as even the rudest and most primitive poetry is not the work of one man, as it is to believe that the simplest domestic utensil is the "work of the community" in the sense alleged, and not of the individual. The *Story of Ung* is as applicable to literature as to the plastic arts. But the inherent weakness of the main theory is demonstrated by an examination of the subsidiary contentions put forward in support of it. The very features relied upon by the upholders of the antiquity of the ballad are pointed to by the advocates on the other side as proclaiming the "literary" and conventional character of that sort of composition; and, whether this suggestion is right or wrong, it is impossible from internal evidence to determine how far such mannerisms are the "artless" artifices of an amateur—"a mere child in such matters"—or the deliberate devices of an "old hand," seeking to follow the practice of "the trade." Nor is the distinction taken between the "decency" of the

[1] *Beginnings of Poetry, ut sup.*, p. 170. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 177 *n.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

modern ballad and the "indecency" of the broadside one whit more convincing. It is said that at a *volks-feste*, at which the whole community turned out with wives and families, gross ribaldry and obscenity would never have been tolerated.[1] The works even of anthropologists might be searched in vain for any more ludicrous hypothesis than one according to which the Fescennine drama should have been a model of decorum, and the comedies of Aristophanes a sort of child's guide to manners.

That there is a community of tone and sentiment in the ballads of Great Britain---possibly in the ballads of the world—is of course perfectly true. But that no more proves their "communal" origin in the sense contended for than the existence of a Chaucerian "school" of poetry proves that such poetry sprang from the heart of the masses. In the days of the *Saturday Review* under Douglas Cook, or of the *Spectator* under Mr. Hutton, or of the *National Observer* under Mr. Henley, there was a striking similarity of tone and style about the articles, insomuch that the paper might almost have seemed to be written by one man.[2] But does that prove the "communal" origin of a single number of those organs? Does it prove that the contributions emanated by some inscrutable means from the whole staff collectively and found their way piecemeal and imperceptibly to the composing-room? Probably not. What the fact really meant was that every one of the contributors was striving to imitate a particular model, to adhere to a particular convention prescribed by a man of commanding ability in journalism. Even so, ballads were written by men of varying degrees of ability. An

[1] "It is to be remembered that communal poetry, sung in a representative throng, cannot well be obscene; made by the public and in public, it cannot conceivably run against the public standard of morality" (Gummere, *ut sup.* p. 170). The indecencies, it seems, were later inventions for "grooms and the baser sort"; the ballad of oral tradition was for the community as a whole.

[2] Mr. Bagehot has dealt with this phenomenon in his invaluable *Physics and Politics*, 1872.

infinity of grades of excellence ranges from the best minstrels at the top to the worst at the bottom. But the dullest attempted in his blundering way to copy the example set by the most brilliant and popular; and the doggerel which recounts the fate of Mr. Weare who lived in Lyon's Inn is as much ballad—belongs, that is to say, to the same *genre*, is "produced under the same conditions," and is impregnated with the same "folk-spirit"—as the gallant and inspiring stanzas which tell us of *Otterbourne* or *Kinmont Willie*. That it is worse poetry is true, but is not to the purpose. The difference is, not that between two distinct species of art, but, the difference between the work of a botcher and of an artist in the same kind.

That the "account" of the ballad maker "closed" somewhere in the sixteenth century would thus appear not to be the case. But even if we take Mr. Gummere's view, and decline to recognise the ballad's poor and *déclassé* relations, the statement is singularly unhappy. The art of producing poetry touched with the popular spirit continued for long after the interest of the populace had been dissipated among other forms of literature. Scott in himself supplies an overwhelming refutation of the theory, whether we take him as the author of the *Harlaw*, or of *Donald Caird*, or of *Carle now the King's Come*, or of *Proud Maisie*.[1] But the remarkable thing is that the true ballad gift was shared by writers without a tithe of Scott's genius, and in some instances by writers whose "environment," it might have been thought, was far from favourable to its cultivation. Lady Wardlaw (1677–1727) had it, as her *Hardyknute*, with all its solecisms, bears witness; Mickle had it; Joanna Baillie had it; Leyden had it; none of them in perfection, but all in a greater or less degree. Even Surtees had more than a touch of it; while Hogg, of course, had it in ample measure. In our own day it has made its reappearance in some—though not all—of Mr. Kipling's

[1] Mr. Gummere, it is only fair to say, faces up to the instance of Scott, p. 169.

Barrack-room Ballads, and certain other poems. It may be replied, indeed, that a trained intelligence can detect the genuine antique from the most exquisite modern imitation. But we may safely defy the expert to discriminate between the touches which are Scott's and the touches which are not, in the *Minstrelsy*, though we may have our suspicions that the best are all Scott's: a conclusion far from pleasing to the advocate of "communal origin." Or, again, it may be said that the ballads as we know them are so adulterated, partly by transmission *per ora virum*, and partly by editorial industry, that we can only catch a very faint whiff of the genuine communal flavour. That may be so; but if it is, there is an end to all controversy. We can only take the ballads as we find them, and it is waste of time to argue about the characteristics of productions which no one has ever seen or heard, and whose very existence depends upon bare conjecture.

Mr. Lang, at one time a warm supporter of the "communal" theory, is much too intelligent and acute to commit himself to the uninviting paradoxes of Mr. Gummere. He refuses to swallow "communal" authorship; "there must have been an original author," he admits,[1] though he very properly points out, what no one can deny, that the work of that author has only been transmitted to us as patched and altered by reciters. But this concession knocks the bottom out of the "communal" theory as expounded by Mr. Gummere, and the mystic word seems no longer necessary. Mr. Lang, however, endeavours to retain the community in another way. He notes that many ballads deal with tales, the plot of which is familiar to every nation on the face of the earth. The savage tribes of Australia, the Patagonians, the Red Indians, the Finns, the Scandinavians, the Ancient Greeks, the Celts, and so on, have independently evolved *märchen* identical in theme and treatment with one another. The origin of such *märchen* may be traced back to prehistoric times. Must not

[1] *Chambers's Cyclopædia*, *ut supra*, vol. i. p. 521.

the ballads in which they are occasionally embodied also go back to prehistoric times? And is not the literary method of the ballad suggestive of a period when the professional minstrel did not exist, and when, the song once made, the maker of it retired into his former obscurity, and it became the possession of the community, or tribe, or race?

The former question may, I think, be answered by pointing out that while the *märchen* may very possibly be infinitely older than the crystallised "myth," it does not follow that its literary expression in verse is older than the set poem in which the myth is incorporated. It may, therefore, quite well be that a Ballad is more modern than a Romance, though the *märchen* which forms its subject is much older than the derivative myth with which the Romance deals. The second question has already been answered, to the effect that none of the ballads we possess can justly be described as "non-literary." On the contrary, all betray the finger of the professional, whether he was skilful in his vocation or unskilful. The community may have been quick in catching up a new song or metrical tale, but it could not catch it up before it was made. The diffusion over a wide area of identical traditions, and the close correspondence that may be discovered between the ballad literatures of different countries, do not seem much to affect the question of the origin of the ballad as a form of literary art, though they may be highly relevant considerations in ascertaining the origin of *märchen* and myths.[1] The great thing is to have got rid of the "communal" theory in its extreme form, with its false antithesis between the "literary" or "artistic" on the one hand, and the "popular" or "communal" on the other. The antithesis had its origin in the sensations of ingenuous delight with which the critics of the eighteenth century hailed the discovery of a new poetry, different from the poetry sanctioned

[1] A reviewer of Mr. Henderson's ed. of Scott's *Minstrelsy* in the *Times* (Literary Supplement) of November 7th, 1902, thinks that the difficulty arising from "diffusion" has never been satisfactorily treated.

by the rigid canons of orthodox taste. But those feelings have had time to calm down, and we are in a position to see the whole perspective more clearly. We can sympathise with Johnson in his criticism and parody of the Ballad; we can admit that "flatness and insipidity" are its besetting imperfection.[1] And, thus endeavouring to approach it without the natural prepossession of those who have *déterré* something—as of a dog that has unearthed a truffle—we are driven to the conclusion that the great "communal" theory will only hold water if "communal" be so pared down in meaning as to become equivalent to "anonymous." That the ballads are *that*, no one will probably deny.

Those who maintain that the ballad is comparatively modern, would have us remember that it represents no healthy reaction from the elaboration and artificiality of the metrical romance, but is merely a sign of decadence—"part of the literary *débris* of the Middle Ages."[2] Its very metre in narrative, they assure us, may be confidently traced to that of romance and allegory, through the medium of the six-line stanza employed by Chaucer in *Sir Thopas*. Its mannerisms, supposed at one time to be indicative of primitive simplicity, are, for this class of critics, as we have seen, the surest proof that the ballad is of late origin. Epic and Romance are, in truth, prior both in fact and logic to popular poetry. "The professional and dignified purpose comes first in the literary process; there is no opportunity in the early stages for the popular."[3] The corruption of the minstrel, in effect, is the generation of the ballad-maker. "So far from the ballad being a spontaneous product of popular imagination, it was a type of poem adapted by the professors of the declining art of minstrelsy from the romances much in favour with the educated classes. Everything in the ballad—matter, form, composition—is the work

[1] Scott's *Minstrelsy*, ed. Henderson, *ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 9.
[2] Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, *ut sup.*, p. 186.
[3] Gregory Smith, *ut sup.*, p. 233.

of the minstrel: all that the people do is to remember and repeat what the minstrel has put together; and, in order to assist the memory, the minstrel continues to use from age to age stereotyped moulds of diction no less artificial than the stilted phraseology of literary poetry criticised by Wordsworth."[1] Thus, while the later ballads are as a rule inferior to the earlier in poetical merit, even the earlier belong to what was essentially a decadent period, and "what the people contributed to the making of the ballads was no more than the taste and sentiment which characterise them. They preserved them, it is true, in their memories after they had been composed, but the matter not less than the form of the poem was, as a rule, furnished exclusively by the minstrel, who adapted the ancient traditions of an art originally intended to please the tribal chieftain or feudal lord, to the temper of a popular audience."[2]

It is much to be regretted that Professor Child was not spared to digest his views upon the origin of ballads and popular poetry into an orderly treatise. It seems probable that he was "a moderate and judicious friend of the popular origin of ballads."[3] But, failing the invaluable assistance which his advocacy could not but have rendered to that cause, the present author is disposed to think the considerations advanced by Mr. Gregory Smith and Mr. Courthope unanswerable. They have the great merit of taking the ballads as they are—not as they may have been, or ought to have been. They are admittedly applicable to the not inconsiderable class of ballads deriving immediately from romance—the ballads which deal with such subjects as *King Arthur and Sir Cornwall*, or *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*. And they have the advantage of being in substantial accordance with the opinions deliberately arrived at by Scott.[4] Scott's instinct

[1] Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. i., 1895, p. 468. The whole of chapter xi., on "The Decay of English Minstrelsy," is well worth study

[2] Courthope, *ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 445. [3] Lang, *ut sup.*, p. 524.

[4] *Minstrelsy*, ed. Henderson, *ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 310.

in such matters was by no means infallible ; its failing generally lent to the side of a superior antiquity. In one point, however, these views appear to require some modification. It would be rash, I think, to deny that metrical versions of *märchen* may have existed at a date considerably prior to the development of "full-dress" romance or epic. But, for our purposes, it is also unnecessary to do so, for, though fragments of such metrical performances *may* be incorporated in the ballads, they cannot now be picked out except on wholly arbitrary and unconvincing principles of selection, and each ballad as a whole belongs to a literary class almost as well defined as that of the *Golden Targe* or the *Essay on Man.*[1]

It may be a question whether the theory of the supporters of the ballad's modern origin is susceptible of world-wide application. But they stand beyond all dispute on exceptionally firm ground as regards the ballads of Scotland, which are admittedly more complete and finer from a literary point of view than those of any other country. While certain English ballads may possibly go back as far as the middle of the fourteenth century, it is a plain and solid fact that "there remain but the merest fragments of anonymous popular Scots poetry which can he referred to the fifteenth century"[2] even, and the great bulk of what we possess does not exist for us at any time anterior to the sixteenth century. The earliest ballad in his collection is scarce, says Scott, coeval with James V.[3] And what, perhaps more than any other circumstance, disposes of the "communal origin" theory is this, that in the case of three ballads, confessedly of the highest excellence, we are able to fix with practical certainty the date of

[1] This is not to say that the work of "vicious intromitters," as Scott happily terms them, may not often be readily detected. See, for example, the additions to *The Young Tamlane* (*Minstrelsy, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 388) supplied by "a gentleman residing near Langholm," to which Mr. Henderson calls attention.

[2] Gregory Smith, *ut sup.*, p. 211. [3] *Minstrelsy, ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 55.

the events which they commemorate.[1] The ballad of *The Queen's Marie*, or *Mary Hamilton*, deals with the results of an intrigue between a French apothecary and a French maid at the Court of Queen Mary, which ended in the execution of both the guilty parties in 1563.[2] The ballad of *Kinmont Willie* refers to an exploit of Scott of Buccleuch in the year 1596. As for the ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*—the most celebrated of all Scottish popular poems, a composition which Professors of Rhetoric have been in use to recite to their classes as illustrative of the simple and unadorned glories of early Scots popular verse—no one now believes it to refer to an event (which never occurred) shortly prior to the death of Alexander III.; and it is assigned with a high degree of probability to the year when rumours were current of a disaster which had overtaken the expedition of James VI. and Sir Patrick *Vans* (not Spens) in 1589 to negotiate a marriage for the King with Anne of Denmark. All three ballads are typical specimens of the class; all three are saturated with the "folk-spirit"; and all three were composed under conditions

[1] The same thing is true of the following among other ballads, to whose names I add the date of the events to which they respectively refer: *Lord Maxwell's Good-night* (*circ.* 1608), *Jamie Telfer* (close of the sixteenth century), *The Raid of Reidswire* (1575), *Dick o' the Cow* (*circ.* 1590), *The Lads of Wamphray* (1593), *The Duel of Wharton and Stuart* (1609); and, of course, the ballads of the Covenant and the "persecution," such as *The Battle of Philiphaugh* (1645), *Pentland Hill*, *Loudon Hill*, and *Bothwell Brig* (all 1679), which, though decidedly inferior in poetical merit and inaccurate in historical detail, are nevertheless admitted even by Mr. Lang, to be "true survivals of the ancient style" (*Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. clviii. p. 389 *n.*). As for the fragment known as *Armstrong's Good Night*, it has been thought to be very late, and to have a possible Jacobite application. But could anything more truly *volksthümlich* be imagined than the *Hey Johnnie Cope* of Adam Skirving? That it is throughout in the humorous vein does not appear to me to exclude it from the class of poems with which we are here dealing.

[2] Mr. Lang has succeeded in displacing the ingenious hypothesis that the ballad celebrates the fate of a Scots waiting woman at the Court of Peter the Great, *anno* 1719 (see *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. lviii. p. 391). But the sixteenth century is as inconvenient a date as the eighteenth for the thick-and-thin supporters of the "communal" theory.

identical with those under which poetry has been written in historical times, or at all events such as to render the idea of "communal" authorship preposterous.[1]

Whatever may be the disputes of critics with regard to the origins of popular poetry, there can be but one opinion as to the superiority of the Scottish versions of the ballads to those which were current in England. The wandering minstrel, through whose agency ballads obtained publicity, appears to have fallen into graver obloquy and contempt in England than in Scotland, though even in Scotland the "jongleur" class stood in no very high repute; and in England printed copies of the ballads are met with much more frequently and at a much earlier date than in Scotland. Now oral tradition has probably been unkind to much popular verse, which has suffered and been corrupted "like sermons repeated by children and serving lasses in a Presbyterian family exercise"[2]; but it has dealt less harshly with it than the early printer, who brought to his work the taste of the town rather than of the country, who was not averse from "editing" what he printed so as to gratify the palate of his urban clients, and who thus was apt to stereotype and fix for posterity the tamest and most commonplace version, in place of the most spirited and distinguished, of any given ballad. The Waverley novels done into "journalese" would present some analogy to the *Battle of Otterbourne* as rendered in the *Chevy Chase* of 1580. But, be the explanation what it may, the fact of the superiority of the Scots ballads is incontestable and uncontested; and in truth they hold their own with the corresponding class of literature in any country.

[1] It may be argued that certain songs, &c., enumerated in the *Complaynt of Scotland* (*vide* the Appendix to this chapter), some of which have reached us in one form or another, must have been well recognised Folk-poems, *Volkslieder*, in 1549, when that work appeared. *Esto;* but *quomodo constat* that they can be traced back for any great length of time, or that they emanated from the "community" and not from an individual?

[2] Colvill's *Whig's Supplication* (1681); Apology to the reader.

A century of enthusiastic and undiscriminating praise has certainly atoned for the neglect which our ballads had previously suffered at the hands of serious critics, and for the ridicule with which they were assailed when they began to steal into the notice of the learned. Extravagance of detraction has been more than met by extravagance of eulogy; and it was perhaps natural that in the attempt to do justice to the splendid qualities which all but the worst ballads unquestionably possess, the defects which mar all but the best should have been ignored. The magnificent simplicity with which the effects are achieved, the astonishing directness with which the minstrel hastens to his mark, the masterly touch with which the deepest chords of emotion in the human breast are swept—it is not unnatural that these should make us willing to conceal from ourselves the lapses into something indistinguishable from doggerel which obtrude themselves in most ballads of any considerable length. *Auld Maitland*, for example, is flat and tedious in the extreme. Few such compositions, whether historical, or quasi-historical, or romantic, are so well sustained throughout as *Kinmont Willie*, or *The Queen's Marie*, or *Jamie Telfer*, or *The Young Tamlane*, which are too long for quotation here. We must content ourselves with three specimens which, however defective in quantity, assuredly leave little to be desired in point of quality. The first is a *Lyke-wake Dirge* of singular impressiveness and power.

"This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle;
Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
And Christe receive thye saule.

When thou from hence away are paste,
Every nighte and alle;
To Whinny-muir thou comest at laste,
And Christe receive thye saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every nighte and alle ;
Sit thee down and put them on ;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every nighte and alle ;
The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bane,
And Christe receive thye saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst passe,
Every night and alle,
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at laste,
And Christe receive thye saule.

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst passe,
Every night and alle ;
The fire shall never make thee shrinke ;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If meat or drink thou never gavest nane,
Every nighte and alle ;
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane ;
And Christe receive thye saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle ;
Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule." [1]

The second is *Fair Helen of Kirconnell*, an exquisite example of its kind.

"I wish I were where Helen lies !
Night and day on me she cries ;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell Lee !

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And cursed the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me !

[1] *Minstrelsy, ut sup.* vol. iii. p. 170.

O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Sall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die!

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says 'Haste and come to me!'

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee, I were blest.
Where thou lies low, and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me." [1]

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[1] *Minstrelsy, ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 126. Mr. Henderson's addition to Scott's prefatory observations on this ballad well illustrates how complicated and obscure a problem it is to trace such a composition to its original.

The third is *Lord Maxwell's Goodnight*, a poem which throws what used to be called a "lurid" light upon the condition of the Borderers at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

"'Adieu, madame, my mother dear,
But and my sisters three!
Adieu, fair Robert of Orchardstane!
My heart is wae for thee.
Adieu, the lily and the rose,
The primrose fair to see:
Adieu, my ladye, and only joy!
For I may not stay with thee.

'Though I hae slain the Lord Johnstone,
What care I for their feid?
My noble heart their wrath disdains:
He was my father's deid.
Both night and day I laboured oft
Of him avenged to be;
But now I've got what lang I sought,
And I may not stay with thee.

'Adieu! Drumlanrig, false wert aye,
And Closeburn in a band!
The Laird of Lag, frae my father that fled,
When the Johnston struck aff his hand.
They were three brethren in a band—
Joy may they never see!
Their treacherous art, and cowardly heart,
Has turn'd my love and me.

'Adieu! Dumfries, my proper place,
But and Carlaverock fair!
Adieu! my castle of the Thrieve,
Wi' a' my buildings there:
Adieu! Lochmaben's gates sae fair,
The Langholm-holm, where birks there be;
Adieu! my ladye, and only joy,
For, trust me, I may not stay wi' thee.

'Adieu ! fair Eskdale up and down,
Where my puir friends do dwell ;
The bangisters will ding them down,
And will them sair compell.
But I'll avenge their feid mysell,
When I come o'er the sea ;
Adieu ; my ladye and only joy,
For I may not stay wi' thee.'

'Lord of the land !'—that ladye said,
'O wad ye go wi' me,
Unto my brother's stately tower,
Where safest ye may be !
There Hamiltons and Douglas baith
Shall rise to succour thee.'
'Thanks for thy kindness, fair my dame,
But I may not stay with thee.'

Then he tuik aff a gay gold ring,
Thereat hang signets three ;
'Here, take thee that, mine ain dear thing,
And still hae mind o' me ;
But, if thou take another lord,
Ere I come ower the sea—
His life is but a three days' lease,
Tho' I may not stay wi' thee.'

The wind was fair, the ship was clear,
That good lord went away ;
And most part of his friends were there,
To give him a fair convey.
They drank the wine, they didna spair,
Even in that gude lord's sight—
Sae now he's o'er the floods sae gray,
And Lord Maxwell has ta'en his goodnight." [1]

Even in this last comparatively short piece, it were idle to deny that there are traces of the hack balladmonger's hand, as well as of the hand of the last and greatest of the Minstrels. Much more, as we have said, in the extended ballads of the narrative, and not the dramatic, type, must we be prepared to find long

[1] *Minstrelsy, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 177.

tracts of what Scott himself has accurately described as "monotony, languor, and inanity." From Scott also we get a plausible and authoritative answer to the inquiry, "What were the peculiar charms by which the old minstrel ballad produced an effect like a trumpet sound upon the bosom of a real son of chivalry?" He finds the explanation in "the extreme simplicity with which the narrative moves forward, neglecting all the more minute ornaments of speech and diction, to the grand object of enforcing on the hearer a striking and affecting catastrophe. The author seems too serious in his wish to affect the audience to allow himself to be drawn aside by anything which can, either by its tenor or the manner in which it is spoken, have the perverse effect of distracting attention from the catastrophe." [1]

But upon the whole, though the opinion may savour of deadly heresy to some, it seems not unreasonable to hold that, from the purely literary point of view, the memorable feature of the ballads consists in the extraordinary vividness and power of occasional stanzas or passages at various stages of the journey to the *dénoûment*. I do not, of course, mean that the excellences of the ballad could be best exhibited in a collection of "elegant extracts," however well chosen. But I think that what stirs the blood and arrests the imagination is, less the poem considered as a whole, than the presence in it at intervals of such verses as, once heard or read, inevitably "echo in the heart" and haunt the memory for ever—verses unmatched in their own or any other language for their abundance in the very stuff of poetry. It may be—

> "My hounds may a' rin masterless,
> My hawks may fly from tree to tree,
> My lord may grip my vassal lands,
> For there again maun I never be!"

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[1] Essay on *Imitations of the Ancient Ballad*, *apud Minstrelsy*, *ut sup.*, vol. iv. p. 6.

from *Jamie Telfer*;[1] or—

"To seik het water beneith cauld ice,
Surely it is a greit folie—
I have asked grace at a graceless face,
But there is nane for my men and me!"

from *Johnie Armstrong*;[2] or—

"Lang, lang, may the maidens sit,
Wi' their goud kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see nae mair,"

from *Sir Patrick Spens*;[3] or—

"Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And e'er they paid the lawing,
They set a combat them between
To fight it in the dawing,"

from *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow*;[4] or—

"O little did my mother ken,
The day she cradled me,
The lands I was to travel in,
Or the death I was to die,

from *The Queen's Marie*;[5] or—

"My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three;
And hide me by the braken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee,"[6]

from *The Battle of Otterbourne*. Without such verses as these, I venture to think that the ballads, however interesting as curiosities, however valuable for the student of anthropology or

[1] *Minstrelsy, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 5. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 356.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 230. [4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 182. [5] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 371.
[6] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 291. It can never be forgotten how this verse among others was repeated by Scott with tears on his visit to "Castle Dangerous" in July, 1831. See Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 1893, p. 727.

folklore, must needs have forfeited their right to more than passing mention in anything that pretends to be a history of literature.

Before bidding a final adieu to the sixteenth century—so momentous an epoch both in Scottish history and Scottish letters—we must say something of certain poets who bring to a conclusion—some of them not unworthily—the illustrious roll of the old Scottish "makaris." Alexander Arbuthnot (1538–83), a man of probity and learning, dared to violate the old Scots tradition by celebrating in a poem *The Praises of Wemen*; William Fowler, conjectured to have been parson of Hawick, translated into rhymed "fourteeners" *The Triumphs of the most famous Poet, Mr. Frances Petrarke* (1587); Stewart of Baldynneis abridged and translated the *Rolana Furious* of Ariosto; and to John Burell, an Edinburgh burgess, we owe an indifferent allegory named *The Passage of the Pilgremer*, and a metrical description of the royal entry into Edinburgh in 1590. William Laŭder, minister of the united parishes of Forgandenny, Forteviot, and Muckarsie, wrote *Ane compendious and breve Tractate concernyng ye office and dewtie of Kyngis, Spirituall Pastoris, and Temporall Jugis*[1] (1556) in somewhat halting rhymed octosyllabics. His theory is that the King is "bot constitute, under God, as ane substitute." None of these bards count for much, and the immortality of John Napier of Merchiston (1550–1617) is assured in virtue rather of his *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio* (1614) than of his *Plaine Discouery* (in rhyme) *of the Revelation of Saint John* (1593), eked out though it be by certain *Oracles of Sibylla*. Alexander, Earl of Glencairn, who, in the early days of the Reformation movement, wrote a satirical epistle from the Hermit of Loretto to his brethren, the Grey Friars,[2] need not detain us; nor is it necessary to dwell at any length upon John Rolland, notary in Dalkeith, and

[1] Ed. Hall, E. E. T. S., 1864.

[2] Quoted by Knox in his *History*, Works, ed. Laing, vol. i. p. 72.

presbyter in the diocese of Glasgow. Rolland wrote two poems, one, *The Seuin Sages*, the date of which is about 1560; the other, and probably earlier, entitled *The Court of Venus*,[1] and published in 1575. *The Court of Venus*, which consists of four books, and is in *aab aab bab*, is one of the last of the poems modelled on the mediæval allegory, to which we have had occasion so often to refer. It is admittedly copied from *The Palice of Honour*, among other models, and its purpose is to describe the trial and condemnation of Desperance before the tribunal of the goddess of love. This not very exhilarating theme is handled in a thoroughly conventional and unoriginal manner, and all the embellishments known to the allegorical poet, from the catalogue downwards, are unsparingly employed. Perhaps the most that can be said for it is that it offers some tolerably attractive material to the legal antiquary. The account of the trial is copious and minute, and has been thought (justly no doubt) to reflect with more or less accuracy the forms of procedure in use in the Scottish consistorial courts of the period.

Much more important than Rolland is Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington (1496–1586),[2] the father of the celebrated Secretary Maitland. He did not commence poet until he had reached the age of sixty, and his tone throughout his poetical works is that of one who, in addition to the physical infirmity of blindness, has "fallen on evil days and evil tongues." Few more unaffectedly pathetic things have been written by an old man than his *Solace in Age*, which has certainly none of the cheerfulness about it that we associate with the elder Cato. Appalled by the economic, political, and ecclesiastical convulsion called the Reformation, Maitland knew not which way to turn. Everything is in the melting pot.

[1] Ed. Gregor, S. T. S., 1883–84. The accuracy of this edition has been sharply challenged by Mr. Craigie in the *Modern Quarterly of Language and Literature*, vol. i. (1898), p. 9.

[2] *Poems*, Maitland Club, 1830.

"The grit men say that the distress
Cumis for the pepillis wickitness;
The peple say, for the transgressioun
Of the grit men, and thair oppressioun,
But nane will their awin syn confess;"[1]

a not unprecedented state of matters. He sees the faults on both sides; the errors of the priests who had been unfaithful to their vows, and the errors of the "fleschlie gospellaris," whose practice falls so far short of their profession. No one has painted the condition of the country in the third quarter of the century in blacker colours than he in his poems *Aganis the Oppressioun of the Comounis*, and *Aganis the theivis of Liddisdaill.*

"Thay theifs that steillis and tursis hame
Ilk ane of them has ane to-name;
Will of the Lawis,
Hab of the Schawis;
To mak bair wawis
They thinke na schame.

Thay spuilye puir men of their pakis,
They leif them nocht on bed nor bakis;
Baith hen and cok,
With reil and rok
The Lairdis Jok
All with him takis.

They leif not spindell, spoone, nor speit,
Bed, bolster, blanket, sark, nor scheit,
Johne of the Parke
Ryps kist and ark
For all sic wark
He is richt meit."[2]

All he can do is to plead for a genuine *concordia ordinum* against the common enemy. He casts a wistful look back to the "good old times."

[1] From *Miserie the frute of Vyce*, in *Poems*, p. 35.

[2] *Poems*, p. 52. This poem will also be found in Scott's *Minstrelsy*, ed. Henderson, vol. i. p 187.

"Quhair is the blythness that hes bein
Bayth in brugh and landwart sein.
Amang lordis and ladies schein,
Dansing, singing, game, and play?
Bot weill I wot nocht quhat they mein;
All merriness is worne away.

For now I heir na worde of Yule
In kirk, on cassay, nor in skuill;
Lordis lettis thair kitchingis cule,
And drawis thame to the Abbay;
And skant hes ane to keip thair mule;
All houshalding is worne away.

I saw no gysaris all this yeir,
But kirkmen cled lyk men of weir,
That never cummis in the queir;
Lyk ruffianis is thair array,
To teitche and preitche that will not leir;
The kirk gudis thai waste away.

. . . . .

And we hald nather Yule nor Pace,
Bot seik our meit from place to place;
And we haive nather luk nor grace;
We gar our landis dowbill pay;
Our tennentis cry, 'Alace! Alace!
That routh and pittie is away!

Now we haive mair, it is weill kend,
Nor our forbearis had to spend;
Bot far les at the yeiris end;
And never hes ane mirrie day:
God will na ryches to us send,
Sua lang as honour is away."[1]

Even in this sea of misfortunes he tries, with a sufficiently bad grace, to assume a cheerful countenance. What good will repining do?

[1] From *Satire on the Age*, in *Poems*, p. 23.

"Quhen I have done considder
This warldis vanitie,
Sa brukill and sa slidder
Sa full of miserie;
Then I remember me,
Theit heir thair is no rest;
Thairfoir, appeirantlie,
To be mirrie is best."[1]

Not, it must be confessed, a very strong incentive to rejoicing, but quite in the vein of Dunbar, in his Mark Tapley mood.

In other matters, too, there is the seal of old age impressed upon Maitland's work. His *Counsell to his Son* is full of the wisest advice, but it smacks something of Polonius, and we may assume that that astute statesman knew all that it contains already. Maitland is never tired of attacking the traditional and ineradicable foibles of all classes in the community, and, in particular, the frailties of the gentler sex, whose taste for "newfangilnes of geir" moves him to hot indignation.[2] Here are some of his wishes for the *New Yeir*:—

"Lordis of the Seat, mak expeditioune,
Gar ever-ilk man mak restitutioune
Of wrangous land and geir;
And we sall eik your contributioune
Now into this new yeir.

Men of law, I pray yow mend:
Tak na ill quarellis be the end
For profeitis may appeir;
Invent no thing to gar us spend
Our geir in this new yeir.

God grant our ladeis chastitie,
Wisdome, meiknes, and gravitie;
And haive na will to weir
Thair claithing full of vanitie,
Now into this new yeir.

---

[1] From *Advyce to Lesom Mirriness* in *Poems*, p. 84.
[2] See his *Satire on the Toun Ladyes*, *Poems*, p. 27.

Bot for to weir habuilyement
According to thair stait and rent;
And all thingis foirbeir
That may thair bairnes gar repent,
Now into this new yeir.

. . . . .

Grace be to gud burges wyfis
That be leisome lawbour thryvis,
And dois vertew leir;
Thriftie and of honest lyfis
Now into this new yeir.

For some of them wald be weill fed,
And lyk the Queinis ladeis cled,
Thocht all thair bairnes sould bleir:
I trow that sic sall mak ane red
Of all thair pakkis this yeir.

God send the commounes will to wirk,
The grund to labour, and nocht irk
To win gude quheit and beir;
And to bring fuirth baith staig and stirk,
Now into this new yeir.

And tak away thir ydill lownis,
Craimes crakeris, with cloutit gownis;
And sornaris that ar sweir;
And put thame in the gailyiounis,
Now into this new year." [1]

They are as seasonable to-day as they were three centuries and more ago, and as they will be three centuries and more hence. The Crames have disappeared, but the "crackers" and the "ydill lownis" may still be discerned without difficulty, loitering in the High Street, or in front of the Register House. On the novel topic of *The Folie of Ane auld Manis marryand ane Young Woman*, Sir Richard talks sound sense:—

[1] *On the New Yeir*, in *Poems*, p. 1.

"Men sould tak voyage at the larkis sang,
And nocht at evin quhen passit is the day;
Efter mid-age the luifar lyes ful lang,
Quhen that his hair is turnit lyart gray."

From the specimens quoted, it will be seen that Maitland was a thoroughly competent and dexterous versifier, and the same inference is suggested by his more formal poetry, such as the verses *On the Quenis Maryage to the Dolphin of France*, or those *On the Quenis arryvale in Scotland*. He indulges in alliteration, and in pieces of this nature his vocabulary tends to be "aureate." "O Royell Roy! thy realme ay rewll by rycht" is one enthusiastic line from a loyal address to King James VI. His use of the *Banks of Helicon*, or the *Cherrie and the Slae*, metre is not perhaps so successful, but the scheme of Redemption from the Creation downwards is perhaps an unpromising one for treatment in that elaborate and fluent stanza. He displays, however, a good deal of ingenuity in a poem of eight lines called *Gude Counsals*, which possesses the singular merit that "ye may begin at ony nuke ye will and reid backward or forward, and ye sall fynd the lyk sentence and meter." He transmitted his talents to his son Sir John, to whom, at all events, is ascribed a poem, *Aganis Sklanderous Tungis*, more difficult to interpret than many earlier pieces, and perhaps worth quoting to the extent of a couple of stanzas:—

"Gif ye be blythe, your lychtnes thai will lak;
Gif ye be grave, your gravite is clekit;
Gif ye lyk musik, mirthe, or myrrie mak,
Thai sweir ye feill ane string and bownis to brek it;
Gif ye be seik, sum slychtis ar suspectit,
And all your sairris callit secret swnyeis;
Dais thai dispyte, and be ye daylie deckit
Persave, thai say, the papingo that prwnzeis.

Gif ye be wyis, and weill in vertu versit,
Cwnning thai call uncwmlie for your kynd,
And sayis it is bot slychtis ye have seirsit,
To cloik the crafte quhairte ye ar inclynd;

Gif ye be meik, yit thai mistak your mynd,
And sweiris ye ar far schrewdar nor ye seme :
Swa do your best, thus sall ye be defynd,
And all your deidis sall detractourise deme."[1]

Whatever may be our estimate of Maitland's poetical gifts, he deserves to be kept in perpetual remembrance for his invaluable services in preserving for posterity much of old Scots poetry which might otherwise have perished. The Maitland MSS.[2] were compiled by him, or rather under his direction, between 1555 and 1586 ; and the collection is only rivalled in interest and importance by that of George Bannatyne (*circ.* 1545—*circ.* 1608), a native of Newtyle and a prosperous business man in Edinburgh, who compiled the anthology which bears his honoured name in 1568, during a visitation of the plague.[3] Bannatyne was a better judge of poetry in others than he was a poet, and such of his original verse as we have is full of conceits and of the battered *clichés* of the "aureate" school of poetry. The reader may, however, be interested to see the concluding stanzas of a piece in honour of his lady love, though we cannot tell whether this was the relict of Bailie Nisbet whom he married in middle life :—

"Nocht ellis thairfoir I wryt to zow, my sweit,
But with meik hairt, and quaking pen and hand,
Prostratis my seruice law doun at zour feit,
Bot nycht and day quhill I may gang or stand ;
Praying the Lord, of pety excelland,
To plant in zow ane petifull hairt and mynd,
Conducting zow to joy euerlastand,
Both now and ay, and so I mak ane end.

[1] *Aganis Sklanderous Tungis* in *Satirical Poems of the Reformation*, ed. Cranstoun, *ut sup.* i. p. 254, and in Maitland's *Poems*, *ut sup.*, App., p. 121.

[2] For a bibliographical account of the MS. collections see Gregory Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots*, *ut sup.*, pp. lxvi. *et seq.*

[3] See the *Memorials of George Bannatyne* (Bannatyne Club, 1829), to which Scott contributed a characteristic and delightful sketch of Bannatyne's life.

Go to my deir with hummill reuerence,
Thow bony bill, both rude and imperfyte,
Go nocht with forgit flattery to hir presence,
As is of falset the custome, use, and ryte;
Causs me noch BAN that evir I the indyte,
NA TYNE my travell, turnyng all in vane;
Bot with ane faithfull hairt, in werd and wryte,
Declair my mynd, and bring me joy agane.

My name quha list to knaw let him tak tent,
Unto this littill verse next presedent." [1]

It is to the pious industry and taste of this excellent man that we owe the preservation (along with much else that could ill be spared) of the poetical works of Alexander Scott,[2] "the Anacreon," as Pinkerton calls him, or, as we might say, the Tom Moore, "of old Scottish poetry." Of Scott's career nothing certain is known, though we may infer from an allusion in his younger rival Montgomerie that he was a feckless enough person, and given to spending most of his time in "daffing." It would appear, too, that he was unfortunate in love. His wife played him false, and he avenged himself in the fearless old fashion by violent and scurrilous invectives against the whole female sex. Thus he is too often conspicuous even among the old "makaris," who were far from being mealy-mouthed, by the unbridled license of his language. The *Ballad maid to the Derisioun and Scorne of Wantoun Wemen* has little to draw attention to it except an extreme coarseness; while, in another vein, the *Justing and Debait up at the Drum betuix Wa Adamsone and Johine Sym* (in a double stanza of eights and sixes plus a bob wheel) merely carries on the not very diverting or edifying tradition of horseplay and buffoonery.

But Scott's inspiration was sometimes happier than this. His metrical versions of a couple of psalms may be nothing

[1] *Memorials of George Bannatyne* (Bannatyne Club, 1829), App. iv. p. 120. Abacuck Bysset (*infra*, p. 250) indulges in a similar jest on his name at the end of his prologue (*Specimens of Middle Scots*, p. 241).

[2] *Poems*, ed. Cranstoun, S. T. S., 1896.

very great, but no one can ignore his *New Zeir Gift to the Quene Mary* (1562). Laboured, no doubt it is, and the alliteration is more obtrusive than agreeable. The last stanza, indeed, which begins—

"Fresch, fulgent, flurist, fragrant flour famois"—

is a miracle of what Mr. Cranstoun happily calls "elaborate trifling."[1] But the rest of the poem is not so fantastic, and, though the material is by this time familiar to us, it is well presented. The clergy of the old ecclesiastical order are attacked for their faults, but so also are the Protestants, who may be seen at church

"Singand Sanct Dauid's psalter on thair buiks";

but in their private walk and conversation are no better than they should be—

"Backbytand nychtbouris, noyand thame in nuikis;
Ruging and raisand up kirk rentis lyk ruikis."

Covetousness and greed have stepped in to the places occupied before by the typical vices of the Churchmen, and the effect of the revolution upon the rural population is vividly sketched in the following stanza:—

"Pure folk are famist with thir fassionis new,
Thai faill for falt that had befoir at fouth;
Leill labouraris lamentis and tennentis trew,
That thai ar hurt and hareit north and south;
The heidismen hes 'cor mundum' in thair mouth,
Bot nevir with mynd to give the man his meir;
To quenche thir quent calamities so cowth,
God gife thee grace aganis this gude new zeir."[2]

An even superior performance to this far from despicable poem is that entitled the *Lament of the Master of Erskyn*, the

[1] *Cf.* "Haif hairt in hairt, ye hairt of hairtis hail" (also Scott's), and Montgomerie's "Tak tyme in tym, or tym will not be tane."

[2] *New Zeir Gift to the Quene Mary*, ll. 137–144.

lover of the Queen Dowager, and one of the slain at Pinkie in 1547. We quote a few verses :—

"Departe, departe, departe,
Alace ! I must departe,
From hir that hes my hart,
With hairt full soir ;
Aganis my will in deid,
And can find no remeid ;
I wait the pains of deid
Can do no moir.

Now must I go, alace !
From sight of her sweit face,
The ground of all my grace,
And soverane ;
What chance that may fall me
Sall I nevir mirry be,
Unto the tyme I see
My sweit againe.

I go and wot not quhair ;
I wander heir and thair ;
I weip and sigh richt sair,
With panis smart ;
Now must I pass away, away,
In wilderness and wildsome way,
Alace ! this woful day,
We should departe.

. . . . .

Adieu, my awin sweit thing,
My joie and comforting,
My mirth and solaceing,
Of earthly gloir !
Farewel, my ladye brycht,
And my remembrance rycht,
Farewel, and haue guid nycht,
I say no moir."[1]

For the rest, Scott shows himself master of a variety of rhythms and measures, and, though he cannot be regarded as

[1] From the *Lament of the Master of Erskyn*, ll. 1–24, and 41–48.

the author of the fine lyric, "O lusty May with Flora Queene," which happens to have been printed by Chepman and Myllar in 1508, he deserves the epithet "sweet-tongued" bestowed upon him by Allan Ramsay for his efforts "when lufe and bewtie bid him spread the wing."[1] The following little lyric is as favourable a specimen of his quality as any other :—

"Lo ! quhat it is to lufe,
Lerne ye, that list to prufe,
Be me, I say, that no wayis may
The grund of grief remufe,
But still decay, both nycht and day :
Lo ! quhat it is to lufe.

Lufe is ane fervent fyre,
Kendillit without desyre ;
Short plesour, lang displesour ;
Repentence is the hyre ;
Ane pure tressour without mesour ;
Lufe is ane fervent fyre.

To lufe and to be wyiss,
To rege with gud adwyiss,
Now thus, now than, so gois the game,
Incertain is the dyiss :
Thair is no man, I say, that can
Both lufe, and to be wyiss.

Fle alwayis frome the snair ;
Lerne at me to be ware ;
It is ane pane and dowbill trane
Of endles wo and cair ;
For to refrane that denger plane,
Fle alwayis from the snair."[2]

He is not, indeed, comparable to the English poets of the Restoration for the "ethereal fire" with which they touch

[1] It may be noted that one of the few modern critics to do justice to Alexander Scott has been Mr. Henley. See his anthology of *English Lyrics*, 1897.

[2] *A Rondel of Luve*, in *Poems*, p. 81.

the same theme; but to rival the "sons of Belial" in this respect is a privilege which has not always been vouchsafed even to genius of the first order.[1]

For all his versatility and accomplishment, Scott must yield the palm to Alexander Montgomerie[2] (*circ.* 1545—*circ.* 1610), of whom it may be doubtful whether he ever "poured the rural lay" at Finlayston Castle in Renfrewshire, or resided at Compston in the Stewartry, but of whom we know with tolerable certainty that he held a post at the Court of James VI., of which, for some reason unknown, he was deprived, and that he "enjoyed" a pension which he had the greatest difficulty in getting paid. Whether he was ever restored to the royal favour is matter of conjecture. He certainly flattered the King in the grossest manner, and we may be sure that it was not for want of "sifflications" that he languished in the cold shade of neglect. Also he would appear to have been unfortunate as a lover.

Montgomerie's devotional poems are not particularly impressive, perhaps owing to the fact that they seem to spring less from a truly religious cast of mind than from the depression of spirits incident to worldly misfortune. He practically admits as much in the *Godly Prayer*, of which two stanzas run as follows:—

"Peccavi Pater, miserere mei:
I am not worthy to be cald thy chylde,
Vho stubburnely haif lookt so long astray,
Not lyk thy sone, bot lyk the prodigue wyld.
My sillie saul with sin is so defyld,
That Satan seeks to catch it as his pray.
God grant me grace that he may be begyld:
Peccavi, Pater, miserere mei.

[1] See a striking passage in Mr. Raleigh's *Milton*, 1900, pp. 259 *et seq.*

[2] *Poems*, ed. Irving and Laing, Edin., 1821; ed. Cranstoun, S. T. S., 1886–7.

I am abashd how I dar be sa bald
Befor thy godly presence to appeir,
Or hazard anes the hevins to behald,
Vha am unvorthy that the earth suld beir.
Yit damne me noght, vhom thou hes boght so deir;
Sed salvum me fac, dulcis fili Dei,
For out of luk this leson nou I leir,
Peccavi, Pater, miserere mei."[1]

But we have no guarantee that, when matters mend, the prodigal will not return to the pleasures of sin. His metrical versions of some of the psalms are spirited and catch the ear. The opening verse of the second psalm, for instance, is decidedly striking—

"Quhy doth the Heathin rage and rampe,
And peple murmur all in vane?
The kings on earth ar bandit plane,
And princes ar conjoinit in campe,
Aganst the Lord and Chryst ilk ane.
'Come let our hands,
Brek all thair bands,'
Say they, 'and cast from us thair yoks.'
Bot he sall evin
That dwells in hevin
Laugh thame to scorn lyk mocking stoks."[2]

His miscellaneous poems are somewhat monotonous in effect, not through any sameness of metre (of which, in truth, he has a great variety at command), but from his incessant harping on his own grievances and woes. "Oh! What a martyred man am I," is the burden of his song; and few refrains are more apt to pall upon a satiated reader. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule. His *Hay now the Day dauis* is an excellent setting of an old song referred to in the *Complaynt*, and the curious "Pageant" in rhymed heroics, called *The Navigatioun* (which has led some literal critics innocently to suppose that Montgomerie was a German by birth and a seaman by occupation),

[1] *Poems, ut sup.*, p. 229,

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

affords an agreeable enough relief from the favourite theme. But the subject which his muse finds most congenial is unquestionably his ill-success in the prosecution of a love affair, in which his affections appear to have been seriously engaged. It had been well if he had always been able to express his feelings as agreeably as he does in *Adeu, O desie of delyt*, a charming thing in its way, for we should thus have been spared much of what, if it cannot fairly be described as whining, is unmistakable and rather unmanly petulance. As for his sonnets, which are characterised by a high degree of technical finish, they, too, insist upon the same topic; but they are diversified by a short sequence on the poet's lawsuit, in which a *crescendo* of annoyance and vexation culminates in violent abuse of his own, and not his opponent's, agent. Here is one of the series addressed to the Lords of Session—

> "My Lords, late lads, now leiders of our lauis,
> Except your gouns, some hes not worth a grote.
> Your colblack conscience all the countrey knawis;
> How can ye live, except ye sell your vote?
>
> Thoght ye deny, thair is aneu to note
> How ye for justice jouglarie hes usit:
> Suppose ye say ye jump not in a jote,
> God is not blind, He will not be abusit.
>
> The tym sall cum vhen ye sall be accusit,
> For mony hundreth ye haif berryit heir;
> Quhare ye sall be forsakin and refusit,
> And syn compeld at Plotcock [Pluto] to appeir.
>
> I hope in God at lenth, though it be late,
> To see sum sit into dirk hellis gate." [1]

King James VI., who, if no great practitioner of the art of poetry,[2] took an interest, as we have seen, in its theory, was a great admirer of Montgomerie's work, and looked upon him

[1] Sonnet XXI.

[2] By far his best performance is his prefatory sonnet to the *Basilikon Doron*, which just misses being really fine.

as supplying a model for several kinds of verse. He held in particularly high estimation the *Flyting* between Montgomerie and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth,[1] which, to modern taste, seems a sad waste of ingenuity and skill. It is not of much consequence whether Montgomerie wrote the whole of the piece, or whether Hume himself wrote the portions attributed to him. Upon the latter hypothesis, Hume had the last word of the argument, and certainly held his own against the more celebrated bard. Montgomerie assures the reader, in a preliminary poem, that—

> "No cankering envy, malice, or despite,
> Stirr'd up these men so eagerly to flyte,
> But generous emulation ;"

which is very satisfactory and reassuring. He also goes on to express the wish—

> " Would all that now doe flyte would flyte like those,
> And lawes were made that none durst flyte in prose!"

In the aspiration contained in the last line all will join, though they may desire the prohibition to be extended to poetry. When once, however, we have overcome our repugnance to an obsolete and unpleasant *genre*, we may admit that this *Flyting* is carried on with immense spirit and vigour, and that it is equally conspicuous for the abundance and foulness of its vocabulary, and for the ease and dexterity with which the combatants handle the most complicated schemes of rhyme and metre. I have sought through the poem in vain for an extract suitable for presentation in these pages ; but there is scarcely a single characteristic stanza, however promising, which is not rendered unfit for the purpose by the presence of some word or image that would not be tolerated in print at the present day. The

[1] Hume was the author of *The Promine* (1580), an "aureate" and extremely fulsome poem in honour of the young King. It will be found in the S. T. S. ed. of his brother, Alexander Hume's *Poems* (1902), App. F., p. 204.

reader must, therefore, either refer to the *Flyting* itself, or rest satisfied with such faint idea of the agility and daring of these poetical gymnasts as may be collected from the opening verse—

> "Polwart, yee peip like a mouse amongst thornes ;
> Na cunning yee keepe ; Polwart, yee peip ;
> Yee look like a sheipe, and yee had twa hornes :
> Polwart, ye peip like a mouse amongst thornes." [1]

Montgomerie's reputation as a poet, however, depends principally for its permanence less upon such of his works as we have already reviewed than upon *The Cherrie and the Slae*, first printed in 1597, and, in a lesser degree, upon *The Bankis of Helicon*, which we are content to follow the authority of Mr. Cranstoun in attributing to his pen. Both are composed in a stanza of fourteen lines, with an intricate and difficult arrangement of rhymes, which appears at once to have caught the fancy of the Scottish public.[2] We have seen that Maitland used this measure for a sacred theme with rather unsatisfactory results.[3] Montgomerie employed it to much better purpose, bequeathing it to Allan Ramsay, who in turn transmitted it to Burns ; and in the hands of so capable a master it proved an admirable servant. It must be owned that Pinkerton was right in opining that this metre is not well suited to a long poem, though he was extravagant and unreasonable in his denunciation of Montgomerie's masterpiece.

The Cherrie and the Slae contains some 1,600 lines of rather obscure plot, one quarter of which is occupied with a love episode, and the remainder chiefly with moralising. It has strong reminiscences of the allegorical poets. Not only does Cupido appear upon the scene, but so do Reason, Wit, Experience, Courage, Skill, Dreid, and Danger, and the worst of it is that

[1] From *Polwart and Montgomerie's Flyting*, ll. 1–4.

[2] For a learned disquisition on this quatorzain, which probably owes one of its most marked features to the Latin hymnal of the Middle Ages, see Henley and Henderson's *Burns*, vol. i. p. 366.

[3] *Supra*, p. 206.

all these excellent personages have "speaking parts." It is impossible to take much interest in the hero, or to rejoice with him in the ultimate success of his enterprise through the somewhat inglorious medium of the coveted fruit falling from the tree for ripeness. Neither are we disposed to inquire whether it is all an allegory of love, or an allegory of virtue, or a composite allegory of both. What makes the poem interesting, apart from the confidence and success with which the stanza is handled, is partly the pithy sententiousness of the author, and partly the freshness and "gusto" with which he sets about his business—more especially in the first three or four hundred lines. Of the former quality, take as a specimen a stanza which reads like an excerpt from some handbook of "proverbial philosophy":—

"Too late I knaw, quha hewis too hie,
The spail sall fall into his eie:
Too late I went to scuillis:
Too late I heard the swallow preiche:
Too late Experience dois teiche—
The skuill-maister of fuillis.
Too lait to fynd the nest I seik,
Quhen all the birdis are flowin:
Too lait the stabill dore I steik,
Quhen all the steids are stowin.
Too lait ay their stait ay
All fulische folk espye;
Behynd so, they fynd so
Remeid, and so do I."[1]

For the freshness and "gusto" let the two opening stanzas vouch—

"About ane bank, quhair birdis on bewis
Ten thousand tymis thair notis renewis
Ilke houre into the day,
The merle and maveis might be sene,
The Progne and the Philomene,
Quhilk caussit me to stay.

[1] From *The Cherrie and the Slae*, ll. 183–96.

I lay and leynit me to ane bus
To heir the birdis beir;
Thair mirth was sa melodius
Throw nature of the yeir;
Sum singing, sum springing
With wingis into the sky:
So trimlie and nimlie
Thir birdis they flew me by.

I saw the hurchcoun and the hair,
Quha fed amangis the flowris fair,
Wer happing to and fro;
I saw the cunning and the cat,
Quhair downis with the dew was wat,
With mony beistis mo.
The hart, the hynd, the dae, the rae,
The fowmart and the foxe
Were skowping all fra brae to brae,
Amang the water broxe;
Some feiding, some dreiding,
In cais of suddain snaires;
With skipping and tripping,
They hantit all in pairis."[1]

It would be rash to say that there is here nothing conventional, nothing borrowed from tradition. But, on the whole, this passage, in common with others in the poem, appears to come into closer contact with nature, and thence to draw its inspiration more directly, than most of the descriptions of a "May morning" in the writers of allegory and romance. At least let us be thankful that it is not "aureate," or compiled, as Montgomerie says, "in staitly verse and lofty style."

The Banks of Helicon is an extremely lively, tuneful, and agreeable poem of about 150 lines, composed by the poet in honour of his lady; and, at the risk of surfeiting the

[1] From *The Cherrie and the Slae*, ll. 1–28.

reader with the metre, I venture to subjoin one excellent stanza :—

> " Appelles, quha did sa decoir
> Dame Venus face and breist befoir,
> With colouris exquiseit,
> That nane micht be compared thairtill,
> Nor zit na painter had the skill
> The bodye to compleit :—
> War he this lyvelie goddes' grace
> And bewtie to behauld,
> He wald confes his craft and face
> Surpast a thousand fauld :
> Not abill, in tabill,
> With colours competent,
> So quiklie, or liklie,
> A form to represent." [1]

With Montgomerie, then, we may say, that the generation of the " makaris " comes to a conclusion. Henceforward, as a rule, the poets looked south of the Tweed for their models, and soon there ceased to be any poets at all to emulate such predecessors as Dunbar, or Lyndsay, or Montgomerie. It has been remarked by Leyden that " however injudicious our ancient authors may be reckoned in the selection of their materials and the arrangement of their topics ; however defective in the arts of composition, and the polish of style ; they can never divest themselves of the manners and habits of thinking familiar to the age in which they lived. It is this circumstance which stamps a real value on the rudest composition of an earlier period, a value which continually increases with their antiquity." [2] However applicable these observations may be to certain cases, we have said enough to make it plain that they are less than fair to the old Scots " makaris." Leyden is too apologetic ; he puts his case too low. It is

[1] *The Bankis of Helicon*, ll. 29-42.
[2] Preliminary Dissertation to his ed. of *The Complaynt of Scotland*, 1801

quite true that these admirable writers possess all the interest which attaches to those whose modes of thought and feeling appear, over the gulf of several centuries, to be different from our own; but they can boast, in addition, the attraction of having been, no mere haphazard bunglers, who now and then fortuitously hit upon a good thing, but, on the contrary, artists to the tips of their fingers. Whatever we may think of the subjects which they made their own, there can be no question that they exercised upon those subjects a conscious, deliberate, and fastidious art; and such was their success, that they raised their country to a position in the scale of poetry superior by far to that occupied by England at any point of time between the death of Chaucer and the rise of the Elizabethan poets. It may be urged, and not without plausibility, that their methods were for the most part conventional and artificial, and that the language in which they wrote was the language of a literary *clique*, of an esoteric band of disciples, and not the language of every-day affairs. But the makars, for all their "aureate" speech, never lost touch of life, and their strong propensity to satire of a robust, not to say ferocious, type, prevented them from degenerating into that most futile and incensing of all things, an academic coterie. The vitality of their tradition was demonstrated when, after the lapse of more than a century, it was creditably revived by Allan Ramsay; and it is no mere figure of speech, but the assertion of the baldest matter of fact, to say that Burns stands in the direct line of descent from Henryson and Dunbar. In Burns, as we shall see, the vernacular convention reached its culminating point, and that it has since become to all intents and purposes extinct is the result of a train of circumstances which was inevitable in its occurrence, and of which not even his genius could thwart the operation.

APPENDIX.

The following is a list of (I.) the Tales, (II.) the Songs, (III.) the Dances, enumerated in *The Complaynt of Scotland* (1549) as having been told, or sung, or danced, by the Shepherds [1] :—

I.—Tales.

The Canterbury Tales.
Robert the Devil, Duke of Normandy.
The Well of the World's End.
Ferrand, Earl of Flanders.
The Red Etin with the three heads.
Perseus and Andromeda.
The Prophecy of Merlin.
The Giants that eat quick men.
On foot by Forth as I could found.
Wallace.
The Bruce.
Hypomedon.
The three-footed dog of Norway.
Hercules and the hydra.
How the King of Eastmoreland married the King's daughter of Westmoreland.
Skail Gillenderson.
The four sons of Aymon.
The Brig of Mantribil.
Sir Evan, Arthur's knight.
Rauf Coilzear.
The siege of Milan.
Gawain and Gologras.
Lancelot du Lac.
Arthur knight, he rode on night, with gilten spur and candle light.
Floremond of Albany.
Sir Walter the bold Leslie.
The tale of the pure tint.
Clariades and Maliades.
Arthur of Little Britain.
Robin Hood and Little John.

[1] These catalogues are annotated by Mr. Furnivall in his introduction to *Captain Cox, his ballads and books*, Ballad Society, 1871 ; reproduced in full in the E. E. T. S. ed. of the *Complaynt*, pp. lxxiii. *et seq.* For the music, consult also Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 2 vols., 1859 ; new ed. by Wooldridge, 1893. Those marked with an * are "Godlified," to borrow Mr. Furnivall's expression in the *Gude and Godlie Ballads*.

Mandeville.
Young Tamlane.
The ring of King Robert.
Sir Eger and Sir Grime.
Bevis of Southampton.
The Golden Targe.
The Palace of Honour.
The tale of Actæon.
Pyramus and Thisbe.
Hero and Leander.
Io.
Jason
Opheus, King of Portugal.
The Golden Apple.
The three Weird Sisters.
Daedalus and the labyrinth.
Midas.

II.—Songs.

Pastance with good Company.
The briar binds me sore.
Still under the leaves green.
Cou thou me the rashes green.
Alice I wyte your twa fair een.
God you, good day, wild boy.
Lady, help your prisoner.
King William's note.
The land nonny no.
The Chapel Walk.
Faith is there none.
Skald Abellis nou.
The Abirdenis nou.
Broom, broom on hill.
Alone I weep in great distress.*
Trolly lolly leman, dow.
Bill, will thou come by a lute, and belt thee in St. Francis' cord.
The frog came to the mill door.
The song of Gilquhiskar.
Right sorely musing in my mind.*
God send the Duke had bidden in France.
All musing of marvels, amiss have I gone.
Mistress fair, ye will forfair.
O lusty May with Flora queen.
O mine heart, hey, this is my song.*

The Battle of the Harlaw.
The hunts of Cheviot.
Shall I go with you to rumbelow fair ?
Great is my sorrow.*
Turn thee, sweet Will, to me.
My love is lying sick.
Fair love, lent thou me thy mantle ? Joy !
The Percy and Montgomery met.
That day, that day, that gentle day.
My love is laid upon a knight.
Alas, that samyn sweet face !*
In ane mirthful morrow.
My heart is leavit on the land.

III.—Dances.

All Christian men's dance.
The North of Scotland.
Hunt's up.
The common entry.
Long flat foot of Garioch.
Robin Hood.
Tom of Linn.
Friars all.
Inverness.
The Loch of Slene.
The Gossips' dance.
Leaves Green.
Mackay.
The spade.
The flail.
The lambs' wind.
Soutra.
Come kittle me naked wantonly.
Shake leg foot before gossep.
Rank at the root.
Baglap and all.
John Armstrong's dance.
The Almayne hay.
The bace of Voragon.
Danger.
The Bee.
The dead dance.
The dance of Kylrynne.
The vod and the val.
Shake a trot.

CHAPTER V

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: POETS, DIVINES, AND HISTORIANS

THE seventeenth century is a period in our history to which no Scotsman who is rational as well as patriotic can look back with unqualified satisfaction. It is true that the religious settlement with which many years of bitter contention terminated, had the merit of being a real, if not an ideally equitable, settlement, and that, before the century closed, excommunication—that darling weapon of extreme religious faction—had been robbed of most of its terrors by the Act of Parliament which dissociated from it all civil penalties.[1] It is true also that both parties can boast of champions in the field and in the council chamber to whom they point with a more or less just pride. On the one hand, there are Montrose and Dundee; on the other there is Argyle. That they had abundance of creditable champions in the pulpit need not be said. Yet it is melancholy to trace the history of the controversies which engulphed so much ability, and caused the pouring forth of so much blood. The misguided attempt of James VI., in 1618, to impose upon the Kirk of Scotland ceremonies, for which the most that could be

[1] Act 1690 c. 58 (28). See also 10 Anne c. 10, sec. 12.

said by their more judicious advocates was, that they were "indifferent" and which were not reintroduced under the second Episcopacy; the fatuous attempt of his son in 1637 to force upon the Kirk an alien prayer-book—these brought about their revenge in the insane endeavour of the Covenanters to thrust Presbyterianism upon a recalcitrant England, and that, in due season, was followed by the execution of the King, and the complete subjugation of Scotland, for the first time in her history, by an English conqueror and an English army.[1] In no age has the "falsehood of extremes" been more signally illustrated. Intolerance bred intolerance; extravagance bred extravagance; and the men of moderate counsels, of whom there was not wanting a tolerable supply, were powerless to stem a torrent that carried them off their feet. Bitter as the lesson was to learn, the nation took it to heart; and, though the old watchwords were again called into use in the nineteenth century, and the old banner was once more unfurled, the bulk of the people has never since seriously wavered in its dogged attachment to moderation.

The struggles of the seventeenth century were far from exercising a propitious influence upon the national literature, which, compared with that of England during the same period, is wofully barren of things really great. We have no Milton or Dryden; scarcely even a Cowley or a Waller. The vigour of the "makaris" has departed, though the tradition of metrical accomplishment and facility is maintained by their successors, who write in English and not in Scots. Our prose literature is, indeed, abundant. A catalogue of the sermons, tracts, and pamphlets which reached the press from Scottish pens would occupy no inconsiderable space. That many powerful intellects devoted themselves to the business of preaching and disputing and arguing is beyond doubt; yet the

[1] An admirable bird's-eye view of the history of the seventeenth century in Scotland may be obtained from Mr. W. L. Mathieson's *Politics and Religion*, 2 vols., Glasgow, 1902.

fruits of all this effort seem to us unsatisfying, and that not merely because we no longer take the same lively interest in the government of the Kirk or the technical points of dogmatic theology. The conventional mode in which both preachers and controversialists handled their topics is not such as to secure for them a permanent place in our regard. The method of the latter is essentially "scholastic" in the worst sense of the word; and as for the former, they are too prone to fall into the *patois*, not of Canaan, or of Habakkuk, but of Drumclog and Mause Headrigg. We cannot but regret that minds so vigorous and so well furnished should have been unable, from the force of circumstances, to apply themselves to some form of literature other than dialectic; and we may be the more thankful for the half-dozen of men, who, in the intervals of ecclesiastical controversy, brought their powers to bear upon historical narrative to excellent purpose.

We may begin our survey of the Scots poetry of the century by calling attention to one of those specimens of the drama, which, as we have seen, are so few and far between in our Scottish literature. *Philotus*,[1] described as "ane verie excellent and delectabill treatise," is in reality a comedy, by an unknown author, which appeared in 1603, the year of the King's accession to the English throne. Borrowed from a tale by Barnaby Rich, its somewhat complicated plot has for its main theme the wooing of youth by crabbed, and wealthy, age. Thus does Philotus at the beginning of the play address the young and beautiful Emilie :—

> "O lustie luifsome lamp of licht,
> Your bonynes, your bewtie bricht,
> Your staitly stature trym and ticht,
> With gesture grave and gude :
> Your countenance, your cullour,
> Your lauching lips, your smyling cheir,
> Your properties dois all appear
> My senses to illude." [2]

[1] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1835. [2] From *Philotus*, ll. 1–8.

Philotus is not conspicuous for delicacy or refinement, and a sort of comic chorus, named The Pleasant, who appears from time to time and comments upon the progress of the action, indulges the old Scots vein of coarse humour with some freedom. The chief value of the piece lies in the light it incidentally throws upon the manners and customs of the age. Here, for example, is a description given by the "macrell," or go-between, to Emilie, of what a day of her life will be like if she marries Philotus :—

"Than tak to stanche the morning drouth
Ane cup of Mavesie for zour mouth,
For fume cast sucker in at fouth,
Togidder with a Toist;
Thrie garden gowps tak of the Air,
And bid zour page in haist prepair
For zour Disjone sum daintie fair,
And cair not for na coist.

Ane pair of Pleuaris pypping hait,
Ane Pertrick and ane Quailzie get,
Ane cup of Sack, sweit and weill set,
May for ane breckfast gaine.
Zour Cater he may cair for syne
Sum delicate agane ye dyne;
Zour Cuke to seasoun all sa fyne,
Than dois imploy his paine.

To sie zour seruants may ze gang,
And luke zour Madynis all amang,
And gif thair onie wark be wrang,
Than bitterlie them blame.
Than may ze haue baith Quaiffis and Kellis,
Hich Candie ruffes and Barlet Bellis,
All fer zour waring and not ellis
Maid in zour hous at hame.

And now quhen all thir warks is done,
For zour refrescheing efternone,
Gar bring unto zour chalmer sone
Sum daintie dische of meate:

Ane cup or twa with Muscadall,
Sum uther licht thing thairwithall,
For Raisins or for Capers call,
Gif that ye please to eate.

Till supper tyme then may ze chois
Unto zour Garden to repois,
Or merelie to tak ane glois,
Or tak ane buke and reid on ;
Syne to zour supper ar ze brocht,
Till fair full far that has bene socht
And daintie disches dearly bocht
That Ladies loues to feid on.

The organes than into zour hall
With Schalme and Tymbrell sound they sall,
The Vyole and the Lute with all.
To gar your meate disgest ;
The supper done, than up ye ryse,
To gang ane quhyle as is the gyse,
Be ye haue rowmit ane Alley thryse,
It is ane myle almaist.

Then may ze to zowr Chalmer gang,
Begyle the nicht gif it be lang
With talk and merie mowes amang,
To eleuate the splene ;
For your Collation tak and taist
Sum lytill licht thing till disgest,
At nicht use Rense wyne ay almaist,
For it is cauld and clene."[1]

We return to the beaten track in proceeding to consider the poetical work of Alexander Hume (1557 ?–1609), minister of Logie, and younger brother of that Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, who contended in "flyting" with Montgomerie (*supra* p. 215). That work is comprised in a volume of *Hymns or Sacred Songs* [2] (published in 1599), "wherein," we are told, "the right use of poesie may be espied." Hume belonged to

[1] From *Philotus*, *ut sup.*, stt., 20–26.

[2] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1832. See also *Poems*, ed. Lawson, S. T. S., 1902.

the more puritanical school of the clergy; he "witnessed against the hierarchy of prelates," and he addressed an *Admonitioun* in prose to the Ministry of Scotland, besides producing *Ane Treatise of Conscience* (1594), and another *Of the Felicitie of the Life to Come* (same year). Hence it is not surprising to find in his preface what looks like an objection to all secular poetry. "In princes' Courts," he says, "in the houses of greate men, and at the assemblies of yong gentilmen and yong damosels, the chief pastime is to sing prophane sonnets, and vaine ballads of loue, or to rehearse some fabulous faits of Palmerine, Amadis, or such like raueries." For these diversions he proposes to substitute lyrics of a more serious and devotional type; but we cannot imagine that his performances were successful in supplanting what was probably better poetry, though it may have made less for edification. His dialect is a curious blend of the Scots and the English idiom, and Gallicisms are freely sprinkled over his lines. Besides the hymns proper, Hume has left us two poems in rhymed heroics, one on the defeat of the Armada, the other, an *Epistle to Maister Gilbert Montcreif*, the king's "mediciner," in which he draws a far from flattering picture of the Court of Session; and they are both remarkable for their anticipation of the orthodox cadence which came to be identified with that measure in the Augustan ages. His happiest lucubration, however, is a poem in "common metre" (eights and sixes) descriptive of a summer's day, and entitled *Of the Day Estivall*. Here he shows a true feeling for nature, and a simplicity and freshness which he failed to impart to his religious songs. I quote two or three stanzas, which, though no great thing in themselves, are sufficiently pleasing :—

"What pleasour were to walke and see
Endlang a riuer cleare,
The perfite forme of euerie tree
Within the deepe appeare;

The Salmon out of cruifs and creels
Up hailed into skowts,
The bells and circles on the weills,
Throw lowpping of the trouts !

O ! then it were a semely thing,
While all is still and calme,
The praise of God to play and sing
With cornet, and with shalme." [1]

At the worst, Hume is a superior performer to Alexander Garden, an Aberdeen Professor who perpetrated, *inter alia*, a *Theatre of Scottish Kings* (1625), if not to Patrick Hannay (d. 1629), whose *Poems* [2] (1622) certainly betray no indication of their Caledonian parentage.

William Lithgow (1582–1645 ? [3]) was "the Bonaventure of Europe, Asia, and Africa, &c.," as one of his title-pages informs us. In other words, he was among the first of the bold and hardy race of Scottish travellers ; and his *Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations* (1632) was so popular a narrative of "moving accidents" that it appears to have been in print, in the shape of a 12th edition, so recently as 1814. The most curious of his works is a slim volume of poems called *The Pilgrime's Farewell*,[4] which would be remarkable, if for nothing else, for the extraordinary number of dedicatory or complimentary sets of verses which it contains. There are dedications in

[1] *Poems, ut sup.*, p. 32.

[2] A selection, entitled *Songs and Sonnets*, was printed at the Beldornie Press in 1841.

[3] This date appears to be doubtful, and the printed catalogue of the Advocates' Library attributes to him a "Paraenesis" to Charles II., *anno* 1660.

[4] "*The Pilgrimes Farewell to his native countrey of Scotland*, wherein is contained in way of dialogue, the Joyes and Miseries of Peregrination. With his Lamentado in his second travels, his passionado on the Rhyne, Diverse other insertings, and Farewels, to noble personages, and the Heremite's welcome to his third Pilgrimage, &c., worthie to be seene and read of all gallant spirits and pompe — expecting eyes. Imprinted at Edinburgh by Andro Hart, Anno Domini 1618. At the expences of the Author." There is an ed. of his Poems by Maidment, 1863.

metre not only to the Nine Parnassian Sisters, the King, and Prince Charles, but also to the Archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews, and the other members of the Scots hierarchy, to the Earl of Dunfermline, Lord Binnie, the Earl of Mar, and John, Earl of Montrose ; in short, to nearly every one who held high office, or exercised high influence, in the Scotland of the time. Lithgow shows some command of the rhymed heroic, and of the stanza *ab ab cc* in which the *Conflict between the Pilgrim and the Muse* is written. But his poetical gift is not rich, and he is sometimes compelled to eke it out by the most extravagant conceits, as in his *Farewell to Northberwicke Lawe*, one stanza of which will probably be found amply sufficient by the most sharp-set readers :—

"Thou steepie hill, so circling piramiz'd,
That for a prospect serves East Louthiane landes,
While ovile flockes doe feede halfe enamiz'd,
And for a trophee to Northberwicke standes,
So mongst the marine hills growes didemiz'd,
Which curling plaines and pastring Vales commaundes :
Out from thy poleme eye some sadnesse borrow
And decke thy listes, with streames of sliding sorrow."

He is better when he bids farewell to Edinburgh, and better still perhaps in his *Farewell to the Clyde*, in which he thus describes the "second city of the Empire" :—

"Ten miles more up, thy well-built Glasgow stands,
Our second metrapole of spirituall glore ;
A citie deckt with people, fertile landes :
Where our great King gotte Welcome, welcome's store ;
Whose Cathedrall and Steeple threat the skies,
And nine archt bridge out ou'r thy bosome lies."

He is best of all in the *Elegy*, with which his volume concludes, and which is touched with a genuine feeling of affection for his native country :—

"So, dearest soyle, O deare, I sacrifice, now see,
Even on the altar of mine heart a spotless love to thee.
And Scotland now farewell, farewell for manie yeares ;
This eccho of farewell bringes out from mee a world of teares."

Simeon Grahame (1570 ?–1614) was no less sincere a patriot, as is evinced by his address *To the famous Isle of Glorious Brittaine* (in *ab ab cc*) and by that *To Scotland his Soyle*, from which I excerpt the following lines :—

"To thee my Soyle (where first
I did receive my breath)
These obsequies I sing
Before my Swan-like death.
My love by nature bound,
Which spotlesse love I spend,
From treasure of my hart
To thee I recommend.
I care not Fortune's frowne,
Nor her unconstant Fate :
Let her dissembling smile,
And tryumph in deceate.
Curs'd be the man which hoords
His hopes up in her lap,
And curs'd be he that builds
Upon her haplesse hap."

Both these poems were contained in a volume, of which the leading feature was a piece in elegiacs, entitled *The passionate Sparke of a relenting minde* (1604).[1] Superior in interest to his verse is a prose treatise which purports to be an *Anatomie of Humors*. Of Grahame we know little personally, save that, on the authority of Urquhart,[2] he was "a great traveller and very good scholar," and that, though licentious in youth, he became pious, *teste* Dempster, in his latter years. There is nothing in the *Anatomie* to suggest that our information is erroneous. It is assuredly not the work of a man accustomed to take a sane and steady view of life. Grahame mentions nothing which he

[1] Ed. Bannatyne Club, 1830. This edition also includes the *Anatomie*.
[2] *Jewel*, *Works*, *ut inf.*, p. 122.

does not attack, though perhaps we may say that the medical profession and the passion of love come in for the hardest knocks. Indeed, he occasionally almost rivals Swift in nastiness when he deals with the latter topic. The book is supposed to have given the hint to Burton for his famous work, but, apart from its excess of violence, it has not much solid merit ; nor can it be compared, for example, with such a masterpiece, in its own line, as Dekker's *Batchelor's Banquet* (1603),[1] which is unrivalled as a repository of all the conventional charges that have been hurled at the heads of married women from the earliest times down to the present day.

An entirely different stamp of man is introduced to us in Robert Kerr, Earl of Ancram (1578–1654), who was on intimate terms with all the literary men (which already means the *London* literary men) of his day, and who has been termed by Drummond "the Muses' Sanctuarye." His *Sonnet in Praise of a Solitary Life*[2] is by no means amiss, and his metrical rendering of some of the Psalms (done from Buchanan's Latin version) is at least no worse than that achieved by many others.

Sir David Murray, of Gorthy,[3] a cadet of the house of Abercairney and a member of Prince Henry's household, besides a number of sonnets, wrote *The tragical death of Sophonisba* (1611) in stanzas of *ab ab bcc*, not particularly harmonious or impressive and marred by too great an affection for double rhymes. A greater, or, at all events, more prolific, bard was Sir William Alexander, of Menstrie[4] (1580–1640), created Earl of Stirling in 1633, and the original grantee of Nova Scotia. His reputation as a statesman stood low with his countrymen,[5] and it cannot be said that his performances in literature do

[1] Ed. Grosart, 1884.

[2] To be found, along with his other poems, in his *Correspondence*, ed. Laing, 2 vols., Edin. 1875.

[3] *Poems*, ed. Bannatyne Club, 1823.

[4] *Poetical Works*, 3 vols., Glasgow, 1870–72. He himself collected his poems under the heading of *Recreations with the Muses* in 1637.

[5] He is badly spoken of by Urquhart in his *Jewel*, *ut inf.*, p. 129.

much to redress the balance. They embrace a collection of sonnets, interspersed with songs and elegies, published under the title of *Aurora* in 1604; a *Paraenesis* to Prince Henry in the same year; and four *Monarchicke Tragedies* (1607) on subjects like Crœsus and Alexander, in *rime croisée*, which are anything but dramatic, and cannot be described as good reading. His *chef d'œuvre* is a *Doomesday* (1614), consisting of well over ten thousand lines, in the stanza *ab ab ab cc*, of which it may be affirmed that not even the description of Hell can kindle a spark of interest or emotion in any reader's breast. The bequest to him by James VI. of the copyright in the King's metrical version of the Psalms shows that he must have stood high in that monarch's esteem; but, as a matter of fact, it brought him probably more odium than profit in the long run. Sir Robert Ayton (1570–1638)[1] was wise enough not to fly at game quite so high as *Doomesdays*, preferring to confine himself to trifles, which he executed with a tolerably light hand, though he invested them with little charm. There is scarcely even the pretence of passion in his amatory lyrics, for, as he himself truly enough confesses—

> "I am neither Iphis nor Leander,
> I'll neither drown nor hang myself for love."

Consequently, affectation has to take the place of true feeling, and, though he never quite becomes "metaphysical" in the technical and Cowleian sense, he is dexterous enough in exercises of this sort:—

> "My heart, exhale in grief,
> With an eternal groan,
> And never let thy sighing cease,
> Till life or love be gone.
> Thy life is crost with love,
> Thy love with loathed breath,
> Thou hates thyself to live such life,
> Life in such love is death."[2]

[1] Ed. Roger, Edin., 1844. [2] From *To his Heart and Mistress.*

There seems no good ground for ascribing to him the original version of *Auld Lang Syne*. His Latin poetry is good, but when his editor remarks that it "unites the smoothness of Virgil with the sweetness of Ovid, and classic elegance of Horace" he appears to be unconsciously affording an illustration of the figure of speech known as hyperbole.

By far the most distinguished poet of what we may call the Court type was William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649),[1] who, though he settled *sur ses terres*, and was not of those who made Whitehall their abiding-place, was among the most diligent imitators of the "Italianate" school of English poetry. Educated partly at the recently founded College of King James in Edinburgh and partly in France, he was thoroughly versed alike in the ancient and in the modern tongues; and his natural abilities were such that, in the opinion of a competent judge, he would have attained the highest rank in his profession if he had given himself, really as well as nominally, to the law, and not to letters and experimental mechanics. His first poem was a set of rhymed heroics on the death of Henry, Prince of Wales, under the title of *Tears on the death of Moeliades* (1613). A year or two later he was destined to celebrate a more intimate grief in the loss of the lady to whom he was about to be married and to whose memory he remained faithful until well on in middle life. In 1617 the King paid his first visit to Scotland since his removal to London in 1603; and Drummond, in whom the sense of loyalty to the person and office of the monarch was strongly developed, commemorated the auspicious event in *Forth Feasting*,[2] a somewhat fantastic strain, a specimen

[1] *Poems*, ed. Maitland Club, 1832; ed. Ward, 2 vols., 1894. See also Masson, *Drummond of Hawthornden*, 1873.

[2] The occasion was also celebrated by a series of poems and addresses, chiefly in Latin, collected, under the name of *The Muses' Welcome* (1618), by Principal John Adamson, a grandson of the Archbishop, and not the least able of a family which through its alliances with the Simsons and Gillespies, has supplied the Church and Universities of Scotland down to our own day with many eminent men.

of which, however, may serve to illustrate as well as another his mastery of the poetic art :—

> "O virtue's pattern, glory of our times,
> Sent of past days to expiate the crimes,
> Great King, but better far than thou art great
> Whom State not honours, but who honours state ;
> By wonder torn, by wonder first install'd,
> By wonder after to new kingdoms call'd,
> Young, kept by wonder near home-bred alarms,
> Old, sav'd by wonder from pale traitors' harms,
> To be for this thy reign which wonder brings,
> A king of wonder, wonder unto kings !
> If Pict, Dane, Norman, thy smooth yoke had seen,
> Pict, Dane, and Norman had thy subjects been ;
> If Brutus knew the bliss thy rule could give,
> Even Brutus joy would under thee to live ;
> For thou thy people dost so dearly love,
> That they a father, more than prince, thee prove." [1]

In the following year Ben Jonson paid his famous visit to Hawthornden, and engaged in the conversations which have provoked so much comment and controversy.[2] It is quite conceivable that Drummond may have found Ben in the flesh something less congenial than a warm admiration for his guest's works had led him to expect. In 1623 Drummond published his *Flowers of Zion*, a collection of religious verse in which his predilection for the sort of philosophy vaguely termed by critics "Platonic" is strongly manifested; and with the mention of this volume we have concluded the enumeration of his poems, with the exception of the many sonnets, epigrams, and other short pieces which will chiefly be found in his

[1] From *Forth Feasting*, ll. 285–300.

[2] Drummond's notes of Jonson's conversation will be found, ed. Laing, in *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iv. pp. 241–70. They were also published in a separate volume for the Shakespeare Society, 1842. Their accuracy was violently impugned by Jonson's editor, Gifford, in his *Memoirs* of the dramatist, *apud Works*, vol. i., and *passim*. The most judicious utterance on the matter is, as usual, that of Sir Walter Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. vii. pp. 74–82.

Poems (1616), and of the copy of Macaronics known as *Polemo-Middinia inter Vitarvam et Nebernam*. Whether these singular lines are properly attributed to Drummond is, indeed, a vexed question. It is said, with some justice, that they do not resemble in tone or spirit his other compositions. But that is a dangerous argument. A more suspicious circumstance is that, while the first printed edition known to us bears the date 1684, the first ascription of the poem to him is no earlier than 1691. Defoe in his *Tour* (1727) imputes the authorship to Samuel Colvill, who is otherwise known for a violent attack on the Presbyterians in the shape of a poor imitation of *Hudibras*, called *The Whigs' Supplication* (1681). The Macaronics are much superior in every respect to this pasquinade, being full of rude life and vigour, and to have been their author infers no disgrace. Without pretending to give a decided opinion on the dispute, I may be permitted here to quote the opening verses, premising that the subject of the piece is a struggle for the assertion of a right of way between the people of Scot of Scotstarvet and those of Cunningham of Newbarns, to whose family, it may be mentioned, Drummond's early love belonged :—

> "Nymphae, quae colitis highissima monta Fifaea,
> Seu vos *Pittenweema* tenent, seu *Crelia* crofta,
> Sive *Anstraea* domus, ubi nat *Haddocus* in undis,
> *Codlineusque* ingens, et *Fleucca* et *Sketta* pererrant
> Per costam et scopulos, *Lobster* manifootus in udis
> Creepat, et in mediis ludit *Whitenius* undis :
> Et vos *Skipperii*, soliti qui per mare breddum
> Valde procul lanchare foras, iterumque redire,
> Linquite skellatas Botas, Shippasque picatas,
> Whistlantesque simul Fechtam memorate bloodaeam,
> Fechtam terribilem quam marvellaverat omnis
> Banda Deûm, quoque Nympharum Cockelshelearum."[1]

In prose, Drummond's most ambitious work is a *History of Scotland* during the reigns of the five Jameses, published post-

[1] *Polemo-Middinia*, Watson, p. 129.

humously in 1655, and not reckoned of any great authority. The political and ecclesiastical troubles of his time did not leave Drummond unmoved. His dislike and distrust of the "Highflyers" were not the less that, from motives of prudence, he signed the National Covenant of 1638. Things would probably have been made very uncomfortable for him had he declined to subscribe that instrument which, after all, beside the Solemn League and Covenant, was comparatively innocuous. He expressed his sentiments on the crisis in several tracts, which he did not, however, publish, and which remained in manuscript until 1711—*Irene: a Remonstrance for Concord, Amity, and Love* (1638), *The Magical Mirror* (1639), and Σκιαμάχια (1643). But the rough-and-tumble work of politics —especially the politics of that age—was not for a man of Drummond's constitution and temperament. He is seen to greater advantage in a work like the *Cypress Grove* (1623), which is a species of philosophical meditation upon death, and of which a single paragraph must here suffice :—

"Death is the violent estranger of acquaintance, the eternal divorcer of marriage, the ravisher of the children from the parents, the stealer of parents from their children, the interrer of fame, the sole cause of forgetfulness, by which the living talk of those gone away as of so many shadows or age-worn stories. All strength by it is enfeebled, beauty turned into deformity and rottenness, honour into contempt, glory into baseness. It is the reasonless breaker-off of all actions, by which we enjoy no more the sweet pleasures of earth, nor contemplate the stately revolutions of the heavens. The sun perpetually setteth, stars never rise unto us. It in one moment robbeth us of what with so great toil and care in many years we have heaped together. By this are succession of lineages cut short, kingdoms left heirless, and greatest states orphaned. It is not overcome by pride, soothed by flattery, tamed by entreaties, bribed by benefits, softened by lamentations, nor diverted by time. Wisdom, save this, can prevent and help everything. By death we are exiled from this fair city of the world; it is no more a world unto us, nor we any more a people unto it. The ruins of fanes, palaces, and other magnificent frames yield a sad prospect to the soul; and how

should it without horror view the wreck of such a wonderful masterpiece as is the body?"[1]

The *Cypress Grove*, has been highly—perhaps even extravagantly—praised. No one who reads it can fail to recognise that here is beautiful and finely-modulated prose, upon which the artificer has lavished all the skill at his command. It has been described as the first "original work in which an English writer has deliberately set himself to make prose do service for poetry"[2]; and it has few, if any, of the vices to which we are so well accustomed in the "prose-poem." Mr. Masson, to whose judgment the utmost deference is ever due, opines that it "surpasses any similar piece of old English prose known to" him, unless it be an occasional passage from some of the English Divines at their best, or from Sir Thomas Browne. This eulogy possibly savours of excess. Drummond, polished, musical, and careful as he is, appears to lack *idiom*, and that consideration serves to point the interest which he has for the student of Scots literature. For Drummond is probably the best instance of the tendency to which we have already adverted in those Scots writers of the first half of the seventeenth century who were *ante omnia* men of letters: the tendency to cut themselves adrift from native tradition and to write in *English*—the current literary dialect of South Britain—at all costs. Drummond was scrupulously and sedulously English: scarce a trace of the Scots idiom can be detected in his writings. The movement which he thus exemplified was not at the time completely successful. Those writers who were preachers or divines first, and men of letters only second, did not indeed write Scots in the strict sense, but, following their natural bent, seasoned what they wrote, as we shall see, with many a vivacious and expressive Doric phrase, which must have sounded strange, if not unintelligible, to the

[1] From *The Cypress Grove*.
[2] Mr. M'Cormick, *apud* Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. ii. p. 191.

Southern ear. In the next century, the movement was to be revived with better fortune. It engaged the warm support of the Church, and to eschew Scotticisms became the ambition and the calling of every man who pretended to learning and refinement.

It must not, however, be supposed that poetry or culture was a monopoly of those whose views, whether owing to temperament or expediency, were of a "Laodicean" complexion. The Saints and precisians too had their bards: their James Cockburns and their George Muschets. They had also their Sappho in Elizabeth Melville, Lady Cumrie, or Culross, of whom it is related that upon one occasion "having great motion upon her," she prayed aloud from her bed "for large three hours' time" to a roomful of people.[1] The sacred effusions of such persons had, as a rule, little merit, and those of Zachary Boyd (*circ.* 1590–1654) are not much better, though Zachary was a man of courage, and, *teste* Baillie, railed on Cromwell and his troops to their face from the pulpit of the High Kirk of Glasgow in 1650. His *Garden of Zion* (1644) is a sort of metrical paraphrase in rhymed heroics of a considerable portion of the Old Testament. The ten plagues of Egypt are described in Latin verse, and the Scriptural lyrics, such as the song of Deborah, are transcribed in doggerel of eights and sixes, like the following:—

"Speake ye that ride on white asses,
In cheefe rulers' aray;
And ye that sit in judgement and
That travel by the way;

And yee, the poorest of the land,
Whose tread was still to drawe
Waters, who for fear of archers,
Did greatly stand in awe."

[1] Livingstone, *Memorable Characteristics*, p. 289. Her *Godlie Dreame* will be found in the S. T. S. ed. of Alexander Hume's *Poems*, 1902, App. D, p. 185.

It was into this form that he also "did" the Psalms in 1646; but, luckily, the version which came ultimately to be approved by the Kirk, and appointed to be used in worship, was neither that of Boyd, nor yet that of Mure of Rowallan, but a version founded mainly upon that of an Englishman, Francis Rous (1579–1659). Bald, harsh, and uninspiring as Rous's translation not infrequently is, it contains many passages of artless and simple beauty, and some of unostentatious dignity. Moreover, it is hallowed by the associations of two centuries and a half. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to say that in recent years it has, to a great extent, been ousted from the services of the Kirk in favour of "hymns" which possess no recommendation whatsoever, except unwholesome sentiment and glib fluency.

The most accomplished poet on the Covenanting side was Sir William Mure of Rowallan (1594–1657),[1] whose mother was a sister of Alexander Montgomerie, and whose earliest poem belongs to 1611. He took an active part in the religious disputes of the following decades, his most pretentious contribution thereto being an essay in dogmatic theology entitled *The true Crucifixe for true Catholiques* (1629), which contains over 3,200 lines. In him, too, we find the rhymed heroic settling down into the orthodox movement, and the following passage might well be supposed to belong to the eighteenth, instead of to the seventeenth, century. It suggests nothing so much as the *Loves of the Triangles*.

> "'Tis most absurd, even in the last degree,
> To thinke God's word and Spirit disagree,
> *This,* striving to restraine and stop the way,
> *That,* grounds to this impiety to lay.
> God's Holy Spirit by no other meanes
> Doth worke, but such as God Himselfe ordaines;
> Whatever superstitious potards dreame,
> Forbidden meanes he hates; and these by name."[2]

[1] *Works*, ed. Tough, 2 vols., S. T. S., 1898.
[2] *The True Crucifixe*, ll. 1235–1242.

In 1650, he wrote *The Cry of Blood and of a Broken Covenant*, upon the occasion of "our late sovraigne's most treacherous and inhuman murther"; and he also administered a *Counterbuff* to "Lysimachus Nicanor" (either John Maxwell, Bishop of Killala, or John Corbet, minister of Bonhill), who in an *Epistle Congratulatorie* had drawn an elaborate and unwelcome parallel between the Covenanters and the Jesuits. Mure's version of the Psalms is undoubtedly preferable to Boyd's; but from the purely literary point of view his most interesting production is his version, in three books, and in *ab ab cc*, of the story of *Dido and Æneas* (1614).[1] Here he shows considerable mastery of his craft, though not perhaps any great depth of feeling. To show that his fluency and facility were far from being contemptible, we cannot do better than quote the following anapæsts of one of his shorter poems :—

"To pleid bot quher mutual kyndes is gain'd,
And fancie alone quhair favour hath place,
Such frozen affectioune I ewer disdain'd :
Can oght be impair'd by distance or space ?
My loue salbe endles quhair once I affect,
Ewin thoght it sould please hir my seruice reject.
Stil sall I determine, till breath and lyfe go,
To loue hir quither scho loue me or no.

If sche, by quhose favour I liue, sould disdaine,
Sall I match hir unkyndnes by prouing ungrait ?
O no ! in hir keiping my hert must remaine,
To honour and loue hir, more then sche can beat.
Hir pleasour can nowayes retourne to my smairt,
Quhose lyfe, in hir power, must stay or depairt.
Thoght fortoune delyt into my owirthro,
I loue hir quither scho loue me or no.

To losse both trawel and tyme for a froune,
And chainge for a secreit surmize of disdaine ;
Loue's force and true vertue to such is unknowne,
Whose faintnes of courage is constancie's staine.

[1] This was first printed in Mr. Tough's edition, *ut sup.*

My loyall affectioune no tyme sall diminisch,
Quhair once I affect, my fauour sall finisch.
So sall I determine, till breath and lyfe go,
To loue hir quither scho loue me or no."[1]

That this is the work of a practised and skilful artist is a proposition which needs no labouring; and it is equally evident that the want of true emotion must for ever doom Sir William Mure to a place in the hierarchy of poets below that of the arch-malignant, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose (1612–50).[2] Montrose could indulge in conceits as well as another. Straightforward and unaffected are scarcely the epithets to be applied to the poem written on the eve of his execution, noble though the poem is in tone and sentiment: "a signal monument" (in the language of David Hume) "of his heroic spirit and no despicable proof of his poetical genius." Nor are the lines on the King's martyrdom wholly faultless:—

"Great, good, and just, could I but rate
My grief to thy too rigid fate,
I'd weep the world in such a strain
As it would one deluge again.
But since thy loud-tongu'd blood demands supplies
More from Briareus' hands than Argus' eyes,
I'll tune thy elegies to trumpet sounds,
And write thy epitaph in blood and wounds."

If they do not deserve the unqualified strictures of Malcolm Laing, neither do they merit the unqualified eulogy of Mark Napier. But Montrose lives as a poet in his familiar lyric, beginning, "My dear and only love, I pray," of which the most familiar lines are the quatrain:—

[1] *Ane Reply to I cair not quither I get hir or no*, in *Works*, *ut sup.* p. 13.

[2] *Memoirs*, by Mark Napier, 2 vols. ed. 1856. The chief authority on Montrose's career is George Wishart (1599–1671), Bishop of Edinburgh, whose *Commentarius* (1647) was translated rather more than a century later. An extremely interesting article on Montrose's attitude to the two Covenants was contributed by the late Lord President Inglis to *Blackwood's Magazine* for November, 1887.

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dare not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all."

We may suppose, if we please, that this poem symbolises loyalty or virtue under the guise of a mistress. But it loses nothing by being taken in its plain and unsophisticated sense. Though its ascription to the great Marquis is not earlier than 1711, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity, and its superiority is manifest to *O tell me how to woo thee*, which Scott at one time believed to be Montrose's, but which, he was afterwards certified, was the work of his own contemporary, Graham of Gartmore.[1] Equally beyond question, Montrose was a better poet than the Earl of Argyle in the succeeding generation, who inscribed a very mediocre exercise in rhymed heroics to Lady Sophia Lindsay, the contriver of his escape from prison in 1682.[2]

Hitherto, we have come across hardly a single reminiscence of the vernacular; English had been since the Union the dialect of the Court, and the favour of the Puritans of England had become a thing to be desired by the Presbyterians, who were not of the Court. Another influence, however, which distracted Scots poets from their mother-tongue was that of Latin, which during the reigns of James VI. and Charles I. was in Scotland "the normal and recognised vehicle of poetic expression."[3] Where George Buchanan had given so brilliant a lead, it is not surprising that many of his countrymen followed; and the large number of more than respectable Latin versifiers whom Scotland produced between the Reformation and the Revolution is in striking contrast to her subsequent barrenness in a delightful and important branch of scholarship. The

[1] *Minstrelsy*, ed. Henderson, vol. iii., p. 385.

[2] See *Law's Memorials*, ed. Sharpe, p. 210, *note*. For Sir George Mackenzie's incursions into the field of poetry, see *infra*, p. 305.

[3] See *Musa Latina Aberdonensis*, ed. Geddes, 2 vols. New Spalding Club, 1892–95.

most eminent and prolific of all these was Arthur Johnston (1587–1661), a physician, born at Caskieben, in Aberdeenshire. He translated the psalms, and wrote sacred and other poems in excellent Latin ; and his *Parerga* are all included in that remarkable anthology for which he was responsible as editor, the *Delitiæ Musarum Scoticarum* (1637).[1] This work was dedicated to Sir John Scot of Scotstarvet (1585–1670), at whose charges it was published, and who was one of the most munificent supporters of literature and learning in his time. Besides a certain amount of Latin verse, Scot was the author of a pamphlet, *The Staggering State of the Scots Statesmen* (1640–50),[2] the very name of which, especially in conjunction with the full territorial designation of its author, should keep it in everlasting remembrance.

We can do no more than enumerate some of the other contributors to the *Delitiæ*. James (the "Admirable") Crichton (1560–83) had been the Sir Charles Grandison of his age, and wrote, among other things, a Latin poem to Aldus Manutius, of which the respectable and learned Dr. Bartlett might have been proud. John Barclay (1582–1621) was the author of an imitation of Petronius, entitled *Euphormionis Lusini Satyricon* (1603) ; and his *Argenis*, a romance which has been translated into many tongues,[3] earned in a later age the enthusiastic encomiums of the poet Cowper. Barclay's Latin is not exactly classical, but it is vigorous and lively. The *Argenis* itself is an allegory and a system of politics as well as a romance. "In it," according to its most recent translator,[4] "the various forms of government are

[1] See Geddes's *Musa Latina Aberdonensis, ut sup.* We can only quote Johnston's description of the Nor' Loch : "Stagna Boraea vocat vulgus ; non ipsa Mephitis Putidior ; nil his pejus Avernus olet" (*Onopordus furens*, ll. 323-4).

[2] Ed. Rogers, 1872.

[3] Into English by Sir Robert le Grys and Thomas May (1628), by Kingsmill Long (1636), and, under the title of *The Phœnix*, by Clara Reeve (1772).

[4] Clara Reeve, *ut sup.*

investigated, the causes of faction detected, and the remedies pointed out for most of the evils that can arise in a state." Sir Robert Ayton, with whom we are already acquainted, was another Latin poet of note; and so were Thomas Dempster (1579–1625), the author of an *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Scotorum*,[1] Sir Thomas Craig, the celebrated feudal lawyer, David Hume of Godscroft (*infra*, p. 274), Dr. David Kinloch, who wrote "De hominis procreatione," Hercules Rollock, David Wedderburn, and Andrew Ramsay, from whose *Poemata Sacra* (1633), William Lauder in the next century averred that Milton had plagiarised in his *Paradise Lost*. Some excellent hexameters by Patrick Adamson, the betrayer of Presbytery, are counterbalanced by the tolerable epigrams of Andrew Melville (1545–1622), its great protagonist. A later writer of such things was Ninian Paterson, whose *Epigrammatum Libri Octo* appeared in 1678. Towards the close of the century, the fine tradition of Latin verse is best maintained by Dr. Archibald Pitcairne[2] (1652–1713), a great light of the medical profession, and, as we shall see, a keen Jacobite.

But the vernacular was not altogether extinct as a medium for verse, and, though no very distinguished achievement in it has to be recorded, there is enough to link the period of the "makaris" to that of Allan Ramsay. There were the ballads about Drumclog and Bothwell Brig, poor stuff as they are; there were attempts to imitate the native conventions, as the *Answer to Curat Caddel's Satyre upon the Whigs*[3] seeks to imitate the old "Flytings"; above all, there was the work of the Sempills, not much to boast of, perhaps, in itself, but of high importance as a bridge between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Robert Sempill, of Beltrees (1595 ?–1659), was a son of Sir James Sempill, who, in addition to certain theo-

[1] Bologna, 1627; ed. Irving, Bannatyne Club, 1829. A list of about fifty of Dempster's works is given by Irving in his *Scotish Writers*, vol. i. pp. 363 *et seq.*

[2] *Selecta Poemata*, 1727.

[3] *Apud* Sharpe's ed. of Kirkton's *Secret History*, 1817, p. 198, *note*.

logical treatises in prose which belong to the first quarter of the century, wrote a satire against Rome in dramatic form under the name of *A Picktooth for the Pope, or the Packman's Paternoster*.[1] Robert's *chef d'œuvre* in poetry was *The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan*,[2] written in what is perhaps the most familiar and popular of all Scottish stanzas, and, as we shall see, the model of innumerable other pieces in the succeeding century. Habbie Simson was the name of the piper in question, and Habbie Simson is the name thenceforth peculiarly associated with a metre in which were achieved some of the chief successes of Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns. The poem is unequal, and by no means always brilliant. Yet, as I have said, it extends a hand on one side to the past, on the other side to the future; and we recognise in it the fidelity to life, to facts as they actually are, which, mingled with a dry, and sometimes acrid, humour is one of the great characteristics of Scottish verse. Of so celebrated a performance, some part must be exhibited; but two stanzas will perhaps suffice to indicate its tone and manner :—

"Now who shall play, the Day it daws?
Or Hunt up, when the Cock he craws?
Or who can for our Kirk-town-cause,
Stand us in stead?
On Bagpipes (now) no body blaws,
Sen Habbie's dead.

Or wha will cause our Shearers shear?
Wha will bend up the Brags of Weir,
Bring in the Bells, or good play meir,
In time of need?
Rab Simson could, what needs you speer?
But (now) he's dead." [3]

[1] The earliest known edition belongs to 1669, but it must be considerably earlier in date.

[2] First printed, to our knowledge, in James Watson's *Collection*, 1706–11.

[3] From the *The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan*, *apud* Watson, p. 32.

In precisely the same vein is the *Epitaph on Sanny Briggs*, a butler, of which the following is a verse :—

"It very muckle did me please
To see him howk the Holland cheese ;
I kend the clinking o' his kies
In time of need.
Alake a day ! though kind to me
Yet now he's dead." [1]

Sanny Briggs was most probably the work of the same author, or of Francis Sempill (1616?–82),[2] his son, who had also, according to report, a gift for vernacular poetry. To him, at all events, are attributed *Maggie Lauder* and *The Blythesome Bridal* (*infra*, p. 382) ; and he appears certainly to be the author of *The Banishment of Poverty by James, Duke of Albany* [York], in which the poet recounts his taking refuge within the precincts of the Abbey of Holyrood. There he finds release from Poverty, hitherto his inseparable companion :—

"An hour or twa I did not tarry,
When my blest fortune was to see
A sight, sure by the might of Mary,
Of that brave Duke of Albany ;
When one blink of his princely eye,
Put that foul foundling to the flight ;
Frae me he banish'd Poverty,
And made him take his last Good-night."

The poems of William Cleland (1661?–89),[3] who lost his life at Dunkeld after Killiecrankie when in command of the Cameronian regiment, are full of Scots phrases and words ; but they are interesting, less for their intrinsic value, than, for the way in which they illustrate the sentiments of the Lowlander towards the Highlander, and thus support a tradition which in

[1] From the *Epitaph on Sanny Briggs*, Watson, p. 37.

[2] The poems of the Sempills were collected and edited by James Paterson, Edin., 1849.

[3] *Poems and Verses*, 1697.

Scottish literature, as we have remarked, is ancient enough. His poem on the *Highland Host* of 1678, written in octosyllabics, contains all the taunts which used to be levied at the denizens of the mountains before the peril caused by their vicinity had been banished by firm measures, and themselves had been discovered to be interesting. Cleland also attacked the Episcopal clergy in verse; but in other departments of poetry he attained not even the very moderate portion of success which rewarded his efforts in satire. His best-known attempt is a version of *Halloo, my Fancy, whither wilt thou go?*

Whig attacks, such as those of Cleland, were not left unanswered. We have already mentioned the *Whigs' Supplication* of Samuel Colvill, which was easily outstripped in wit and pungency by Pitcairne's *Babell*,[1] a satirical poem on the proceedings of the General Assembly in 1692, in about 1,400 lines of Hudibrastic octosyllabics, interspersed with rhymed heroics. Vigorous as the piece is, however, it must yield the palm for point and venom to a singular production in prose from the same pen at about the same date. *The Assembly*, a Comedy,[2] is a triumph of unscrupulous, but amusing, scurrility, which must have appeared grossly blasphemous to the ultra-Presbyterian faction, and by the present age must be pronounced not over decent. One of the author's chief butts is Mr. David Williamson, of the West Kirk, who, on account of a notorious *faux pas* with the daughter of a South country Maxwell, is introduced as Mr. Solomon Cherry-trees, talking the dialect of the Canticles, and behaving in a manner far from creditable to a minister of the Gospel. The meetings of the Commission of Assembly are caricatured, and the various members who took part in them are hit off, without much subtlety, but still with a vigorous enough pencil. The following prayer is put into the Moderator's mouth :—

[1] Ed. Maitland Club, 1830.

[2] First printed, apparently, in 1722.

"O Lord, who art the author and finisher of our disorder; who directs us in all our confusion to do thy holy will; settle our spirits, and e'en give us thy best advice for thy own work, or it will go the waur on."

This is but slightly exaggerated: every one accustomed to the services of the Kirk or the sittings of her Courts must have heard something very like it. Perhaps the most interesting character in *The Assembly* is Laird Littlewit, a ruling elder from the north, into whose mouth is put the dialect of Aberdeenshire with all its peculiarities of pronunciation phonetically indicated. Robert Mylne (1643?–1747), who is said to have lived to over a hundred, was another diligent Tory satirist. But much of this sort of work is remarkable only for its bitterness and indecency, and, however curious as indicative of the state of public opinion, can scarcely claim to be reckoned as serious literature.[1]

As has already been indicated, the literary Scots dialect practically disappears from prose in the seventeenth century. Only one specimen of its deliberate employment—or, at the most, two—is known to us. *The Rolment of Courtis* (1622)[2] was written by Abacuck Bysset in his "awin maternale Scottis langaige or mother tung," which may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that he wrote in his old age with his own hand. Abacuck, whose father had been "cater to Queene Marye," was a loyal subject of the King, and appears to have been disposed to be a *laudator temporis acti*. So also, as regards speech and language at least, was Alexander Hume (1558?–1631?), who was successively Rector of the Edinburgh High School, Master of the Grammar School at Prestonpans, and Master of the Grammar School at Dunbar, and whose *Grammatica Nova*

[1] The reader may be referred to Maidment's *Book of Scottish Pasquils* (1827, new edition 1868), where many specimens by various hands are collected.

[2] Still in MS. An extract will be found in Mr. Gregory Smith's *Specimens of Middle Scots*, p. 239.

(1612) had for some time a great vogue in places where they flog. Hume dabbled a little in theology, but his most valuable work is a thin pamphlet, written some time after 1617, *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue.*[1] This *brochure* is dedicated to James VI., in whom the author seems to believe he has a sympathiser. He has heard, he says, that, during his visit to Scotland, the King reproved his courtiers "quha on a new conceat of finnes [fineness] sum tymes spilt (as they cal it) the King's language. Quhilk thing it is reported that your Majestie not only refuted with impregnable reasones, but alsoe fel on Barret's opinion that you wald cause the universities mak an Inglish grammar to repress the insolencies of sik green heades." "In school materes," continues the worthy pedagogue, "the least are not the least, because to erre in them is maest absurd. If the fundation be not sure, the maer gorgiouse the edifice, the grosser the falt. Neither is it the least parte of a prince's praise, *curasse rem literariam*, and be his auctoritie to mend the misses that ignorant custom hath bred."[2] We must not pause to discuss Hume's opinions, which have frequently been ventilated since in divers forms, though the accession of the House of Hanover to the British throne luckily put an end to all serious thought of fixing our speech by the interposition of Royal authority. Hume interests us less as a grammarian or as a theorist on education, than as a writer and a man. Would that he had given us a thousand passages like the following!

"To clere this point, and alsoe to reform an errour bred in the south, and now usurped by our ignorant printeres, I wil tel quhat befel myself quhen I was in the south with a special gud frende of myne. Ther rease, upon sum accident, quhither quho, quhen, quhat, etc. sould be symbolized with a q or w, a hoat disputation betuene him and me. After manie conflictes (for we ofte encountered), we met be chance, in the citie of Baeth, with a Doctour

[1] Ed. Wheatley, E. E. T. S., 1865. [2] Dedication, ed. E. E. T. S., p. 2.

of divinitie of both our acquentance. He invited us to denner. At table my antagonist, to bring the question on foot amangs his awn condisciples, began that I was becum an heretik, and the doctour spering how, ansuered that I denyed quho to be spelled with a w, but with qu. Be quhat reason? quod the Doctour. Here, I beginning to lay my grundes of labial, dental, and guttural soundes and symboles, he snapped me on this hand and he on that, that the doctour had mikle a doe to win me room for a syllogisme. Then (said I) a labial letter can not symboliz a guttural syllab. But w is a labial letter, quho a guttural sound. And therfoer w can not symboliz quho, nor noe syllab of that nature. Here the doctour staying them again (for al barked at ones), the proposition, said he, I understand; the assumption is Scottish, and the conclusion false. Quherat al laughed, as if I had been dryven from al replye, and I fretted to see a frivolouse jest go for a solid ansuer." [1]

We may conjecture with what feelings a rigid Scottish Conservative like Alexander Hume must have regarded the prose work of William Drummond (*supra*, p. 238). But if he would have chastised Drummond with whips, not even scorpions would have sufficed to express his feelings towards Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty [2] (*circ.* 1605–60), one of the most eccentric figures that present themselves in the whole course of the literary history of these islands. He was a dungeon of learning; he dabbled in science; he revelled in language; and the greater part of his life was passed in a hard struggle with relentless creditors.[3] A more consummate pedant never existed, yet he produced one of the great translations of the world, and that the translation of a work whose one aim, if aim it has, is the annihilation of pedantry. Urquhart's rendering of the first two books of Rabelais [4] appeared in

[1] *Of the Orthographie, &c., of the Britan Tongue, ut sup.* p. 18.

[2] *Works*, ed. Maitland Club, 1834.

[3] "I should have been," he tells us, "a Mecænas to the scholar, a pattern to the souldier, a favorer of the merchant, a protector of the tradesman, and upholder of the yeoman, had not the impetuosity of the usurer overthrown my resolutions and blasted my aims in the bud" (*Logopandecteision*, bk. vi. 36).

[4] The best edition is that in the *Tudor Translations* Series, 2 vols., 1900. Mr. Whibley's introduction is an admirable piece of criticism.

1653; and his version of a third was published in 1693 by Motteux, who himself completed the task. No other work could have lent itself so readily to the peculiarities of Urquhart's genius, or so successfully called forth his unrivalled "volubility of utterance" and dexterity of tone, phrase, and accent: qualities which he attributes, even in the use of foreign tongues, to his countryman Dr. Seaton. But, in truth, Urquhart was the last professor of the Elizabethan, or Tudor, extravagance in prose, of which the first taste north of the Tweed had been afforded by *The Complaynt of Scotland*.

Of his original writings, the *Epigrams* (1641) are disappointing, and the *Trissotetras* almost unintelligible, not merely to the layman, but also to "those that are mathematically affected." He appended to it, however, a *Lexicidion*, of which his other treatises would be none the worse; for he indulges freely in ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, nor is it an easy matter to jump at the correct meaning of a word like "Jobernolisme."[1] In 1652, he published the *Pantochronochanon, or a peculiar Promptuary of time*, in which he solemnly deduces the pedigree of his house step by step from Adam and Eve. To the same year belongs the *Ekskybalauron, or the Discovery of a most exquisite Jewel*; and in 1653 appeared the *Logopandecteision*, an amazing rigmarole, in which he intermingles proposals for a universal language with sketches of his own career, glimpses of his tastes and habits, statements of his grievances, and other really interesting matters. Urquhart is said to have died of a fit of laughing on hearing of the Restoration of Charles II.

The *Jewel*, as we will call it for brevity's sake, bears to be "a vindication of the honour of Scotland from that infamy whereinto the rigid Presbyterian party of that nation out of their covetousness and ambition most dissembledly hath involved it." With much that is fantastic, or nonsensical, is mixed up a great deal of high interest and value. He gives an account of many Scots who had recently done honour

[1] The *Jewel*, p. 265.

to their country in peace or war, and raised the fame of Scotland to a high pitch among foreign nations; and he professes to have discharged his task with straightforwardness and simplicity of language.

"I could truly, having before my eyes some known treatises of the author, whose muse I honour, and the straine of whose pen to imitate is my greatest ambition, have enlarged this discourse with a choicer variety of phrase, and made it overflow the field of the reader's understanding, with an inundation of greater eloquence; and that one way, tropologetically, by metonymical, ironical, metaphorical, and synecdochical instruments of elocution, in all their several kinds, artificially affected, according to the nature of the subject, with emphatical expressions in things of great concernment, with catachrestical in matters of meaner moment; attended on each side respectively with an epiplectick and exegetick modification; with hyperbolical, either epitatically or hypocoristically, as the purpose required to be elated or extenuated, they qualifying metaphors, and accompanied with apostrophes; and lastly, with allegories of all sorts, whether apologal, affabulatory, parabolary, aenigmatick, or paraemial. And, on the other part, schematologetically adorning the proposed theam with the most especial and chief flowers of the garden of rhetorick, and omitting no figure either of diction or sentence, that might contribute to the ears, enchantment, or persuasion of the hearer."[2]

Doubtless he could have done all this, and played many other startling tricks which he names, but luckily he held his hand. Master Alexander Ross, Dr. Seaton, Robert Baron, William Leslie, William Guild, John and David Leech, Robert Gordon of Straloch—these and many others, generally from the North country, he commemorates with propriety and gusto: and his own character stands forth among the rest, vain and egotistical to the last degree, yet loyal and high-spirited, no stranger to lofty ideals, and, above all, *fier comme un Écossais*. He is at his happiest, perhaps, when describing some feat of arms, some notable contestation with the rapier or the foils, such as his heroes Sinclair and Mercer were wont

[2] The *Jewel*, Works, *ut sup.*, p. 292.

to engage in for the honour of Scotland. His very best passage is unquestionably his sketch of the inimitable Crichton —much too long for quotation here. We must be satisfied with presenting an extract in a more reflective vein, wherein shrewdness and sense are no less apparent than whimsicality and humour.

"Then was it that the name of a Scot was honourable over all the world, and that the glory of their ancestors was a passport and safe-conduct sufficient for any traveller of that country. In confirmation whereof, I have heard it related of him who is the τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα of this discourse, and to whose weal it is subordinated, that, after his peragration of France, Spaine, and Italy, and that for speaking some of those languages with the liveliness of the country accent, they would have had him pass for a native, he plainly told them, without making bones thereof, that truly he thought he had as much honour by his own country, which did contrevalue the riches and fertility of those nations, by the valour, learning, and honesty, wherein it did parallel, if not surpass, them. Which assertion of his was with pregnant reasons so well backed by him, that he was not much gainsaid therein by any in all those kingdoms. But should he offer now to stand upon such high terms, and enter the lists with a spirit of competition, it fears me that instead of laudatives and panegyricks, which formerly he used, he would be constrained to have recourse to vindications and apologies; the toyle whereof, in saying one and the same thing over and over again, with the misfortune of being the less believed the more they spoke, hath proved of late almost insupportable to the favourers of that nation, whose inhabitants, in forraign peregrinations, must now altogether in their greatest difficulties depend upon the meer stock of their own merit, with an abatement of more than the half of its value, by reason of the national imputation; whilst in former times, men of meaner endowments would in sharper extremities, at the hands of stranger-people, have carryed thorrow with more specious advantages, by the only vertue of the credit and good name of the country in general; which, by twice as many abilities as ever were in that land, both for martial prowess and favour of the muses, in the persons of private men, can never in the opinion of neighbour states and kingdoms, be raised to so great hight as publick obloquy hath deprest it. For as that city whose common treasure is well stored with money, though all its burgers severally be but poor, is better able to maintaine its reputation than that other, all whose

citizens are rich without a considerable bank; the experience whereof history gives us in the deduction of the wars betwixt the Venetians and Genois: even so will a man of indifferent qualifications, the fame of whose country remaineth unreproached, obtaine a more amicable admittance to the societies of most men, than another of thrice more accomplished parts, that is the native of a soyle of an opprobrious name; which, although after mature examination it should seem not to deserve, yet upon the slipperiest ground that is of honour questioned, a very scandal once emitted will both touch and stick."[1]

Urquhart's writing is separated by a wide gulf from the normal prose written in Scotland during his century. He is not, indeed, by any means the only writer who errs with Osric or Holofernes; but the pedantry of the divines, who were the largest contributors to our prose, is to some extent incidental to the topics upon which they were in use to expatiate, and the extravagances to which it led in their case are wholly different in kind from the surprising eccentricities of the Knight of Cromarty. To these more ordinary and commonplace authors we must now divert our attention; and we shall, for convenience' sake, treat first of those whose works are primarily of a controversial, hortatory, or devotional character, and secondly of those who chiefly narrated facts either in "full-dress" histories, or in less formal journals and memoirs.

Among the controversialists, the place of honour must be assigned to the three Forbeses: William (1585–1634), the first Bishop of Edinburgh; Patrick (1564–1635), Bishop of Aberdeen; and John (1593–1648), the son of Patrick, and professor of Divinity in the University of Aberdeen. All three were Aberdeenshire men, and being, not merely learned, but also, of the highest character and reputation, they rank among the most respectable and effective of the champions of a moderate episcopacy. William, choosing to appeal to a wider circle than the theologians of Scotland, threw his

[1] From the *Jewel*, Works, *ut sup.*, p. 272.

arguments into the language which then and for some time afterwards was the common tongue of educated Europe. His posthumous *Considerationes modestae et pacificae* [1] do not belie their title, and the sturdy Calderwood himself admits that his teaching was to the effect that ceremonies are "maters of moonshine." That, like many other proposals for the Re-union of Christendom, they were something too complaisant to Rome, from the staunch Protestant point of view, may be granted. Yet, that they failed to bring about the slightest *rapprochement* between rabid partisans was not the good Bishop's fault, and was no more than the fate which usually attends the proffering of olive branches. Patrick Forbes is perhaps more remarkable for the excellent work he achieved in the diocese and University of Aberdeen than for his literary labours; yet his *Commentarie upon the Revelation of St. John* (1614) should not be lightly contemned, and he deserves the grateful recollection of the Church of Scotland for taking up Ninian Winzet's challenge, and appending to that work a "Defence of the lawful calling of the ministers of Reformed Churches against the cavillations of Romanistes." John Forbes [2] reverted to Latin, and his *Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ* (1645), won him high renown as a learned divine. The famous *Irenicum* (1629), as the Parson of Rothiemay tells us, was "very ill tackne by the Presbyterian partie in those tymes," but had probably less to do with his deposition from the ministry and banishment from the country than his refusal to sign either Covenant. None the less, if his diary [3] tells the truth, the views he held were not such as would be repudiated by any intelligent Presbyterian to-day, however displeasing they might seem to a believer in the divine right of

[1] First published in 1658 under the editorship of Thomas Sydserf, Bishop of Galloway. There is a modern edition, 2 vols., Oxford, 1850–56.

[2] *Opera Omnia*, 2 vols., Amst., 1702–3.

[3] It is much to be regretted that this work, a MS. copy of which is, I believe, in the Episcopal Training College in Edinburgh, has never yet been printed in full.

prelacy. "The episcopacy which I think lawful," he declares, "and agreeable to God's word, is not destructive of the presbyterie, nor inconsistent therewith; and in those churches which are governed only *communi presbyterorum consilio*, the want of such a bishop with them is indeed, in my opinion, an economical defect, but it is not an essential defect, neither taketh away the true nature of a church, neither doth it make void and invalide the ordination and jurisdiction thereof."[1]

A mere disclaimer of the episcopal order as essential to the existence of the true Church would have given but meagre satisfaction to those bulwarks of the Presbyterian cause, Alexander Henderson (*circ.* 1583–1646), minister of Leuchars; George Gillespie (1613–48), minister of Wemyss, and afterwards of Edinburgh; and David Dickson (1583–1663), minister of Irvine, and Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh from 1650 onwards. All were men of exceptional intellectual gifts and profound learning, and all occupied a commanding position in the Church. Henderson was moderator of the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638; ten years later, Gillespie, then in the last year of a comparatively short life, occupied the same office; and in 1643 the three, along with Robert Baillie and Samuel Rutherford (of whom hereafter) were despatched to Westminster as "Commissioners of the National Church to treat for uniformitie," and assisted in drawing up the standards of faith and discipline which were adopted by the Supreme Court of the Church of Scotland in 1645 and 1647. Whatever foibles or failings may have characterised this trio of divines, they were at all events "true blue Presbyterians," and an Independent, or any species of sectary or schismatic, was as repugnant to their conception of the constitution of Christ's Kirk as the most infatuated supporter of prelacy.

Henderson's works[2] consist chiefly of detached sermons and

[1] Spalding's *Memorialls*, ed. Spalding Club, vol. ii. app. p. 500.

[2] A volume of *Sermons, Prayers, and Addresses*, ed. Martin, was published in 1867. His *Life* has been written by Dr. Aiton, of Dolphinton (1836), and by M'Crie (1846).

speeches. No systematic work, except a short treatise on *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* (1641), remains to testify to his powers of reasoning or exposition ; and it must be acknowledged that what we have is consequently a little disappointing. In particular, such specimens of his prayers as have reached us are decidedly commonplace. In dialectical ability, there can be no doubt that Gillespie,[1] with youth to assist him, was Henderson's superior. Wonderful, indeed, are the tales told of Gillespie's performances in the Westminster Assembly ; and he who chooses may believe that he improvised the answer to the fourth question of the *Shorter Catechism* on the spur of the moment. His tractates are more erudite and acute than readable ; and the formal mode in which he arrays his arguments is not encouraging to the modern student. One of his great contentions was with Thomas Coleman, an Erastian divine, and it is curious to trace its stages. Gillespie begins by appending to a sermon preached before the House of Lords in 1645, *A Brotherly Examination* of some passages in a sermon of Coleman's. Coleman replies with *A Brotherly Examination re-examined.* Gillespie duplies with *Nihil Respondes*, to which Coleman's retort is *Male Dicis Maledicis*. At every step passion becomes warmer. Finally, Gillespie gets the last word with *Male Audis*, in which (to quote his editor) he convicts Coleman and his friends of "numerous contradictions, of unsoundness in theology, of violating the covenant which they had sworn, and of inculcating opinions fatal to both civil and religious liberty." Gillespie's masterpiece is a long and elaborate vindication of the " divine ordinance of Church Government," entitled *Aaron's Rod blossoming* (1646). But probably his name will survive, at least furth of Scotland, less through his own merit than through the contemptuous allusion made to it by the greatest of sectaries in a famous sonnet.

David Dickson[2] was reckoned a particularly able controver-

[1] *Works*, ed. Hetherington, 2 vols., Edin., 1846.

[2] A little volume of his *Select Practical Writings*, 1845, is convenient.

sialist, and, after the overthrow of the first Episcopacy in 1638, was sent north with Henderson and Andrew Cant to convert the "Aberdeen doctors,"[1] a mission in which they by no means succeeded, and which produced merely a war of pamphlets. In later years Mr. David was a stout Resolutioner; that is to say, a supporter of those who declined to "boycott" all such of their countrymen as were tainted, in however trifling a degree, with "malignancy." Casuistry was probably his forte, and his *Therapeutica Sacra* (1656) used to be highly esteemed by Protestant, or, at any rate, Presbyterian practitioners of that dangerous, though fascinating, art. But that he was a vigorous and homely preacher on the less recondite topics of the pulpit the following extract seems to show :—

"Seeing men's estate is not to be judged by their own estimation or by others', but according to the Lord's censure, let all try their carriage by that which he says of them in his word, and all the exercises of his worship. Speir at thy prayer, what devotion is in thee, and it will say, that thy prayers are so coldrife that they cannot pierce up to heaven. Speir at thy conversation among men, what is thy estate, and it will tell thee, it is coldrife, stubborn, implacable, cankered, unmerciful, and has a heart that cannot repent. Speir what love thou hast to God, and it will be told thee, thou can hear his name dishonoured, and care little for it; and thou cares not much how thy children and servants grow in knowledge or fear of God. And if thy deeds speak thus, why art thou so secure? Why blessest thou thyself, when thy manners say, that the world is more in thy mind than heaven? when the account book is more perused than the Bible? when the debts that are owing to thee are more in thy mind than the debts thou art owing to God? What is the cause thou can comport with this estate? It is because Satan has no will that the dyvour [bankrupt] read over the account-book, or the sinner examine his deeds; and men have no will their deeds be brought to the light, but hate the light because it reproves them. Or if the minister point at their faults, 'Oh!' say they, 'some men

[1] The members of this justly celebrated group were John Forbes, Robert Baron, Alexander Scroggie, John Leslie, James Sibbald, and Alexander Ross. (See Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 1861, vol. ii. p. 371.)

have told him yon of me; or he suspects me.' But learn ye to examine yourselves as ye shall answer to God, and as ye would be set free that day when he shall judge the secrets of all hearts. Let not the complaint the Lord makes be made of you, 'I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' (Jer. viii. 6). Therefore every one of you speir at yourself, whereon your fear, love, care, grief, pleasure, is most set; and if not on God, ye have reason to suspect yourself."[1]

For mere preaching, none of his contemporaries had a greater name than Andrew Cant[2] (1590–1664), minister of Pitsligo, then of Newbattle, and then of Aberdeen, where he was the reverse of popular, as being one of the few North country ministers who had warmly embraced the Covenant. We have a sermon of his preached in the Greyfriars' Church in Edinburgh in 1638, which is a very fair sample of the discourses of the time. His text is Zech. iv. 7, "Who art thou, O great mountain before Zerubbabel?" The mountain of course presently turns out to be the pestiferous and proud mountain of prelacy; and the six "steps" of the text are thus set forth: (1) A mountain seen; (2) A mountain reproved and disclaimed; (3) A mountain to be removed; (4) A growing work; (5) To be finished; (6) With great applause of all well-willers wishing grace unto the work. And so it runs on, through endless heads and subdivisions, to the peroration, when every order in the state is harangued in turn. The nobles are apostrophised as the high mountains of this kingdom, the barons and gentlemen as the pleasant hills coming from the mountains, and the burghs as the valleys whom God hath blessed with the fatness of the earth and the merchandise of the sea. Cant, who "spared not to deliver the whole counsel of God before King or State,"[3] perhaps had more influence over other people than over his own household.

[1] *Sermon on Zephaniah* iii. 1, 2.

[2] Robert Baillie described him as "ane super-excellent preacher."

[3] Livingstone, *Memorable Characteristics*, p. 251.

His son, Andrew the second, conformed to Episcopacy at the Restoration; and *his* son, Andrew the third, adhered to that form of Church government at the Revolution, preached an appropriate sermon ("by one of the suffering clergy in the Kingdom of Scotland") on the 30th of January, 1703, and was consecrated Bishop of Glasgow in 1722.

Samuel Rutherford (1600–61), a native of Nisbet in Roxburghshire, has probably enjoyed a greater and more widely extended posthumous celebrity than any of his fellow-commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. For this he is not indebted to his controversial writings, though none attacked error on either hand more fiercely than he. In his *Exercitationes de Gratiâ* (1636), and again in his *De Divinâ Providentiâ* (1651), he assailed Arminians, Socinians, and Jesuits. In *Lex Rex* (perhaps the most happily named of all the pamphlets of a pamphleteering age), he expounded the case of the Parliament and Church against the King, and the work, which appeared in 1644, was paid the compliment of being burned by the common hangman in 1661. In *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644), he stood out for the Church against the Sectaries, and he returned to the charge five years later in *A Free Disputation against pretended Liberty of Conscience*. It is not, we repeat, upon these that his fame now rests, but upon his *Letters*,[1] the first edition of which appeared in 1664 under the title of *Joshua Redivivus*. The *Letters* have at least this merit, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to read them with indifference. They inspire either enthusiastic admiration or an antipathy amounting almost to disgust. Moreover, in the estimation of their admirers, a distaste for them is symptomatic of moral as well as critical incapacity. "The haughty contempt of that book which is in the heart of many will be ground for condemnation when the

[1] Ed. A. Bonar, Edin., 1894. There is a *Life* of Rutherford, by Thomas Murray, 1828. See also *Samuel Rutherford and some of his Correspondents*, by A. Whyte, D.D., Edin., 1894, which is eulogistic and uncritical.

Lord cometh to make inquisition after such things." Thus the pious Dr. Love ;[1] and it can only be hoped that the doctor is out in his confident forecast that a revision of erroneous critical opinions will form part of the business of the Day of Judgment.

After a youthful *faux pas*, which resulted in his being deprived of his regentship in the University of Edinburgh, Rutherford was finally settled in the parish of Anwoth, where he ministered with great "acceptance." He was a faithful pastor to his people, and though his voice was shrill—and often, indeed, rose into a *skreigh* or screech—he seems to have had plenty of action, and his preaching was highly esteemed. For failure to "conform," he was deprived of his cure at Anwoth, and sent to Aberdeen, a town full of "Papists and men of Gallio's naughty faith," where, by a stroke of genius, he was prohibited from opening his mouth in a pulpit. No penance could have been more severe. "My dumb Sabbaths," he writes, "are like a stone tied to a bird's foot that wanteth not wings."[2] And again, "God's word is as fire shut up in my bowels, and I am weary with forbearing."[3] He made up, however, for this deprivation by conducting a voluminous correspondence with his friends in the South, of whom the most noteworthy, perhaps, was a certain Marion M'Naught. This excellent lady was always complaining of the misdeeds of her "enemies," and Rutherford, like the good Christian he was, cheers her up by the blasphemous prediction that she shall "see her desire" upon them.[4] To another female correspondent he declares that it is "part of the truth of your professioun to drop words in the ears of your noble husband continually of eternity, judgment, death, hell, heaven, the honourable profession, the sins of his father's

[1] Dr. Love's *Letters* (1838), Letter xiv. Dr. Duff, in his introduction to the edition of the Letters published in 1881, hints a not dissimilar view, in much less forcible and direct language.

[2] Letter xcix., p. 207. [3] *Ibid.* lxxv., p. 160. [4] *Ibid.* xiv., p. 59.

house."[1] Few men care for being reminded of the "sins of their father's house"; and it may be surmised that Rutherford's popularity was greater, upon the whole, with the wives than with the husbands.

When the Covenanting party triumphed, Rutherford became Principal of the New (*i.e.*, St. Mary's) College, St. Andrews. We have already seen how he was sent as an emissary of the Kirk to Westminster. In the divisions of the sixth decade of the century he was a warm supporter of the "Remonstrance," and it might have gone hard with him had he survived the Restoration longer. Like many worse men, 'a made a good end; and our accounts of his death-bed are circumstantial and edifying. His last words are said to have been, "Glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land"; and they have been ingeniously utilised for the refrain of a popular nineteenth-century hymn.

The main characteristic of Rutherford's *Letters* is their consistent abuse of the figurative language of the *Song of Solomon*. No sort of speech needs greater tact and discretion to make it tolerable than this. Now tact and discretion were not Rutherford's strong points, and if he was not the only, he was probably the most grievous, offender in this regard. He describes himself as a man often borne down and hungry, "and waiting for the marriage supper of the Lamb."[2] "You have been of late," he writes to Marion M'Naught, "in the King's wine-cellar, where you were welcomed by the Lord of the inn, upon condition that you walk in Love."[3] He looks back with fond regret upon "the fair feast days that Christ and I had in his banqueting house of wine," and exclaims, "Alas! that we enquire not for the clear fountain, but are so foolish as to drink foul, muddy, and rotten waters, even till our bed-time. And then in the Resurrection, when we shall be awakened, our yesternight's sour drink and swinish dregs shall rift up upon us, and sick,

[1] To Lady Kenmure, Letter xxx., p. 91.
[2] Letter lxiii. [3] *Ibid.* xii.

sick, shall many a soul be then."[1] He must needs ride every metaphor (whether vinous or otherwise) to death. Not even Burke in his wildest flights had less sense of proportion, less perception of the fitting. One instance will be sufficient. Referring to the emigration of the "Pilgrim Fathers," he says, "Our blessed Lord Jesus, who cannot get leave to sleep with his spouse in this land, is going to seek an inn where he will be better entertained. And what marvel? Wearied Jesus, after he had travelled from Geneva, by the ministry of worthy Mr. Knox, and was laid in his bed, and reformation begun and the curtains drawn, had not gotten His dear eyes well together, when irreverent Bishops came in, and with the din and noise of ceremonies, holy days, and other popish corruptions, they awake our beloved."[2]

I have purposely abstained from quoting the more unctuous of his sallies; and indeed it would be difficult to extract a passage of any length from the *Letters* which was not disfigured by something ludicrous or vulgar even to the point of gross irreverence. But the odd thing is that this jargon is sprinkled every now and then with the technical phrases of the law of Scotland, and the effect of the mixture is indescribable. Here, indeed, we have the "forensic" view of the atonement in its purest form. "Your decreet comes from Heaven," he assures a correspondent; "Christ is the clerk of your process."[3] "O, how would I rejoice," he exclaims, "to have this work of my salvation legally fastened upon Christ! A back-bond of the Lord Jesus, that it should be forthcoming to the orphan, would be my happiness."[4] Thus does he console one who had lost a daughter: "Remember of what age your daughter was, and that just so long was your lease of her. If she was eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years old, I know not; but sure I am, seeing her term was come and her lease run out, ye can no more justly quarrel with your great Superior for taking His own at His just term day than

[1] Letter lxxii. [2] *Ibid.* xii. [3] *Ibid.* xii. [4] *Ibid.* cxx.

a poor farmer can complain that his master taketh a portion of his own land to himself when his lease is expired."[1] And here, finally, is one aspect of the divine government of the universe: "It is now many years since the apostate angels made a question, whether their will or the will of the Creator should be done; and since that time, froward mankind hath always in that same suit of law compeared to plead with them against God, in daily repining against His will. But the Lord, being both party and judge, hath obtained a decreet, and saith 'My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.'"[2] Truly, these *Letters* are, in the language of Dr. Duff, "soul-stirring effusions." We may part from Rutherford with a slightly more favourable impression if we peruse the following excerpt from a characteristic sermon full of absurdities though it be :—

"In the word and sacraments, Christ now takes you into the chariot with himself, and draws your hearts after him. Be Satan's nor the world's footmen no longer; for it is a wearisome life; but ride with Christ in his chariot, for it is all paved with love; the bottom of it is the love of slain Christ, ye must sit there upon love. Love is a soft cushion, but the devil and the world make you sweat at the sore work of sin, and run upon your own foot too; but it is better to be Christ's horsemen to ride, than to be Satan's trogged footmen, and to travel upon clay. Christ says He has washen you to-day; sin no more; keep yourselves clean; go not to Satan's sooty houses, but take you to your husband the fairest among ten thousand, that your lovely husband may make your robes clean in the blood of the Lamb. Ye are going into a clean heaven and an undefiled city: Take not filthy clatty hands and clatty feet with you. What say ye of your new husband? Please ye your new husband well, may not his servants say in his name, that he is heartily welcome to you? A plain answer; ye cannot well want an half-marrow, no soul liveth well a single life. Now, seeing you must marry, marry Christ; ye will never get a better husband; take Him and his father's blessing; fall to and woo him; be holy and get a good name, and Christ will not want you. It is many a day since ye

[1] Letter ii. [2] *Ibid.* iii.

were invited to his banquet: why should ye bide from it? Ye are not uncalled; and Christ both sitteth and eateth with you; and standeth and serveth you; Christ both said the grace to-day and prays my Father's blessing be at the banquet. Your father cries, Divorce, divorce all other lovers, go and agree with Christ your cautioner, and purchase a discharge if you can. It is better holding than drawing; better to say, Here he is, than, Here he was, and slippery-fingered I held him, and would not let him go. Rive all his cloaths, and he will not be angry at you: In death he held a strait grip of you: hell, devils, and the wrath of God, the curse of the law, could not all loose his grips of you. Christ got a claught of you in the water, and he brought you all with him. Look up by faith to him. You could never have been set up by angels. May not Christ say, The law soon took a cleik of me, and drew me among thieves for your cause; and was not that strong love, that humble Christ cared not what they did to him, so being he might get you? In that night our Lord was betrayed, he ordained the supper for you upon his deathbed, he made his testament, and left it in legacy to you; in death he had more mind of you, his wife, than he had of himself; in the garden, on the cross, in the grave, his silly lost sheep was ay in his mind. Love has a bra' memory and cannot forget; he has graven you on the palms of his hands, and, when he looks upon his hands he says, My sheep I cannot forget; yea, in my death, my sister, my spouse, was ay in my mind; she took my night's sleep from me, that night I was sweating in the garden for her."[1]

A wholesome antidote to the luscious and heady liquor purveyed by Rutherford is supplied by Henry Scougal (1650–78), minister of Auchterless, and Professor of Divinity in King's College, Aberdeen, not to be confounded with his father Patrick, who was Bishop of that northern diocese. Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*[2] was introduced to the public in 1677 by Bishop Burnet, and

[1] From *An Exhortation at Communion to a Scots Congregation in London*, Falkirk, 1775. There seems to have been a great depôt at Falkirk in the last quarter of the eighteenth century for the distribution of religious broadsides, such as this, containing sermons by Mr. James Renwick, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, and other savoury divines.

[2] There is a modern edition by Professor Cooper, Aberdeen, 1892. See also Butler, *Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists*, 1899.

has always been recognised as a most valuable tractate on practical religion. It was presented to Whitefield by Charles Wesley, and, while eminently devout, is studiously purged of those "melting expressions" with which men of the Rutherford type used "to court their Saviour." In the authoritative words of Bishop Jebb, it is "free from the slightest puritanical tincture," and is "no less soundly rational than it is deeply pious." Scougal's was essentially the "moderate" temperament. The Christianity which he advocated was modelled on the teaching of the New, not of the Old, Testament. "There are but too many Christians," he justly observes, "who would consecrate their vices and hallow their corrupt affections; whose rugged humour and sullen will must pass for Christian severity; whose fierce wrath and bitter rage against their enemies must be called holy zeal; whose petulancy towards their superiors, or rebellion against their governors, must have the name of Christian courage and resolution." [1]

An even more distinguished member of the same school of thought was Robert Leighton (1611–84),[2] minister of Newbattle, and Principal of the University of Edinburgh, who, although the son of an eminent sufferer in the Presbyterian cause,[3] accepted the Bishopric of Dunblane in 1661, and the Archbishopric of Glasgow in 1670. The last ten years of his life he passed in a remote village in the South of England. Every one, whether friend or foe, speaks well of Leighton. Alexander Brodie says that "he thought holiness, the love of God and our brethren, was the chief duty God was calling us unto, and sobriety and forbearance to one another." [4] The testimony of Kirkton is equally emphatic. "A man of good learning," he calls him, "excellent utterance, and very grave abstract conversation,"

[1] Ed. 1870, p. 3.

[2] *Expository Works*, ed. Doddridge, 2 vols., Edin., 1748; *Whole Works*, ed. Pearson, 4 vols., 1830.

[3] Alexander Leighton, the author of *Sion's Plea against Prelacy*, 1628.

[4] Brodie's *Diary*, 1740, p. 50.

though, as in duty bound, he qualifies his approbation by adding that Leighton was "almost altogether destitute of a doctrinal principle, being almost indifferent among all the professions that are called by the name of Christ." [1] And to the same purpose even Wodrow, who has practically nothing to insinuate against the walk and conversation of the Bishop of Dunblane alone among all the Scots Bishops of Charles II.

Leighton's works, which are all posthumous, and for the most part appeared under the editorship of Dr. Fall, embrace a *Practical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter* (1693–94), an *Exposition of the Creed* (1701), *Lectures* on the first nine chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, certain *Theological Lectures*, and a number of sermons. They are all distinguished by the same characteristics—by a smooth and equable flow of language, rather than by strained and turgid rhetoric; and their style admirably reflects the meek and quiet spirit which animates them. They are almost entirely free from theological or devotional *argot*, and are obviously infected by that English atmosphere of compromise, the taint of which was so abhorrent to the ecclesiastical brawlers and fire-eaters of the time. It would be hard to name any writer of his age in Scotland who so abounds in "sweet reasonableness." His prototype in this respect is perhaps William Cowper (1566–1617),[2] Bishop of Galloway half a century before, brother of the refractory "Mr. John." (*Infra*, p. 278.) It cannot, therefore, unfortunately, be said that Leighton's works are typically and essentially "national"; but Leighton occupies so remarkable a position among our divines, that a brief specimen of his writing must on no account be omitted :—

"When men speak of the vanity of this world's greatness, and poor men cry down riches, it passes but for a querulous, peevish humour to discredit things they cannot reach, or else an ignorant misprision of things they do not understand; or, taking it a little

[1] Kirkton, *Secret History*, ed. Sharpe, 137. [2] *Works*, 1623.

further, but a self-pleasing shift, a willing under-prizing of these things of purpose to allay the displeasure of the want of them ; or, at the best, if something of truth or goodness be in the opinion, yet that the assent of such persons is (like the temperance of sickly bodies) rather a virtue made of necessity than embraced of free choice. But to hear a wise man, in the height of these advantages, proclaim their vanity, yea, kings from the very thrones whereon they sit in their royal robes, give forth this sentence upon all the glories and delights about them, is certainly above all exception. Here are two the father [David] and the son [Solomon] : the one raised from a mean condition to a crown ; instead of a shepherd's staff to wield a sceptre, and that after many afflictions and dangers in the way to it, which, to some palates, gives a higher relish and sweetness to honour than if it had slid on them ere they could feel it, in the cheap easy way of an undebated succession. Or, if any think David's best days a little cloudy, by the remains of insurrections and oppositions, in that case usual, as the jumblings of the sea not fully quieted for a while after the storm is over ; then, take the son, succeeding to as fair a day as heart can wish, both a complete calm of peace and a bright sunshine of riches and royal pomp, and be able to improve these to the highest. And yet both these are perfectly of the same mind on this great point. The son having peace and time for it, though a king, would make his throne a pulpit and be a preacher of this one doctrine to which the father's sentence is the fullest text I have seen." [1]

We cannot pause long to dwell upon the other preachers, pamphleteers, and devotional writers of the seventeenth century. Of preachers, not the least memorable was Robert Bruce (1559–1631),[2] who is described by Andrew Melville as "a hero adorned with every virtue, a constant confessor, and almost martyr, of the Lord Jesus." Bruce's *Sermons* are redolent of the Scottish idiom, which may be accounted for by the fact that many of those which we possess were delivered before the close of the sixteenth century. The series of discourses on Isaiah is matched by that on the Sacraments, which constitutes an admirable exposition of the high reformed doctrine on that important topic. Walter Balcanquhall

[1] From sermon *Upon Imperfection and Perfection.*
[2] *Sermons*, ed. Cunningham, Wodrow Soc., 1843.

(1586–1645), the son of a divine whom James VI. had found to be extremely contumacious, was a strong advocate of Episcopacy, and his *Large Declaration* (1639) is in effect a vehement attack on the Covenanters. An even more distinguished and thoroughgoing supporter of Episcopal pretensions was John Maxwell (1590 ?–1647), Bishop of Ross, and afterwards Bishop of Killala and Archbishop of Tuam, a man of learning and integrity, whose *Burthen of Issachar* (1641) is his most successful polemical publication. The genuine Presbyterian position, on the other hand, was admirably defended by James Fergusson (1621–67), minister of Kilwinning, who was the author of sundry expositions of St. Paul's Epistles, and of *A brief refutation of the errors of Toleration, Erastianism, Independency, and Separation* (1652). He refused the offer of the Divinity professorship in Glasgow University, and is reckoned to have had "a peculiar faculty of making things intricate, plain and easy to be understood." Robert Douglas (1594–1674), minister of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh, and, after the Restoration, "indulged" minister of Pencaitland, preached the Coronation sermon at Scone in 1652,[1] and was no less staunch a champion of Presbytery than Fergusson. He may be said to have succeeded Henderson as the "leader" of the Church. James Guthrie (1612–61) was one of the first ministers of the Reformed Kirk of Scotland to preach and practice the doctrine that schism is lawful for a defeated minority. He was the prime author of the "Remonstrance," and perished on the gallows for his part in that affair in 1661. The address to the King which he drew up on the Restoration is well worth perusing; for it shows how far the extreme Covenanters were from the most rudimentary ideas of religious toleration, and how they longed once more to impose the yoke of Presbytery upon England. His most celebrated work is a tract on the *Causes of the*

[1] The *Sermon* will be found in Scott's edition of Somers's *Tracts*, vol. vi. p. 117.

Lord's wrath against Scotland (1653).[1] His kinsman William (1620–65), minister of Fenwick, was equally celebrated as a pulpiteer, and more so as a sportsman. Bishop John Sage (1652–1711) was one of the most acute controversialists on the Episcopalian side at a later date ;[2] nor must we forget his services to literature in the shape of an introduction to Ruddiman's edition of Gavin Douglas (1710), and to the same printer's reissue of William Drummond's *History* (1711). Equally repugnant to the two contending factions in the Kirk was Robert Barclay (1648–90), son of the laird of Urie, whose *Theologiæ veræ Christianæ Apologia* (1776) is a defence of the Society of Friends, which in Scotland was exposed to some persecution and represented the craving of many good men for religious peace.

Two of the most notorious writers on the Covenanting side after the Restoration were John Brown (d. 1679), sometime minister of Wamphray, and Robert M'Ward (1633 ?–87). From the vantage ground of Holland, whither they had been compelled to retreat, they plied their unhappy sympathisers at home with incendiary literature. Brown wrote *An Apologeticall Relation* (in four hundred pages), of the particular sufferings of the faithful ministers and professors of the Church of Scotland (1665), and a *History of the Indulgence* (1678). M'Ward, who was the more violent of the two, was responsible, among other things, for an attack on the "Accommodation" proposed by Leighton (1671), for *The Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water* (1678), and for Ἐπαγώνισμοι, *or Earnest Contendings for the Faith* (1681 ; printed in 1723), which was a protest against union with the indulged. Lastly, in this branch of our subject, may be mentioned Alexander Shields (d. 1700), the Cameronian, whose *Hind let loose* (1687), a trifle of more than

[1] By some this piece has been assigned to Hugh Kennedy.

[2] See more especially his *Fundamental Charter of Presbytery examin'd and disprov'd* (1695) in his *Works*, ed. Shand, 3 vols., Spottiswoode Society, 1844–46.

seven hundred closely printed pages, bears to be "an historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ." He praises Brown and M'Ward for "detecting the iniquity of the cess," and we find from his pages that the convenient doctrine of only paying such taxes as you please was already fully developed. Also, it is worth remarking, as illustrative of the spirit of the extreme party, that Shields boldly vindicates "extraordinary execution of judgment by private men" (in plain English—assassination), as well as the policy of "refusing to pay wicked taxations."[1] We have touched little more than the fringe of the vast literature of this sort which exists or existed; and yet, even of what we have mentioned, a good deal is in no true sense literature at all. A mixture of antiquated dialectic with frenzied rhodomontade is not inviting, and the best part of many of the pamphlets of the age is the title. Upon this much ingenuity was spent, and the art of the headline and the newsbill, so to speak, was thoroughly comprehended. Pitcairne makes a palpable hit when he represents his pious old lady as quoting Dickson's *Sermons*, Rutherford's *Letters*, and *Eleven Points to bind up a Believer's Breeches*.[2]

The distinctive features of the historians and memoir-writers as regards style are in some respects not essentially dissimilar from those which the reader will have observed in the controversialists and divines whom we have been considering. Most of the historians *were* controversialists and divines as well; and while their histories contain few "bursts of eloquence" and comparatively little strong language, their dialect is English, more or less tempered with native phrases and native idioms. The

[1] An effective contrast to such firebrands is afforded by a man like Lawrence Charteris (1625–1700), grandson of Henry Charteris, the printer, and author of a posthumous tract *On the Corruption of the Age* (1704). Had the Revolution settlement been as comprehensive in its working out as King William wished to see it, essentially moderate Episcopalians, like Charteris, might have been able to remain in the Establishment.

[2] From *The Assembly, ut sup.*

classic purity of English literary speech is, no doubt, impaired by the rough intrusion of this northern element; but the effect, at least to Scottish ears, is by no means displeasing, and the free employment of expressions, which were not far-fetched or exotic, but came naturally to our writers, prevents Scots prose from degenerating into a frigid academic exercise. It may be bald and unambitious, but it has often the charm of being fresh and unaffected, and of not being bookish, except in so far as it tends slavishly and unintelligently to follow the language of the authorised version of the Scriptures. One of the oldest of the historians, curiously enough, is one of the least distinctively national (or local) in his manner of writing. But David Hume of Gowkscroft, or, as he preferred to have it, Godscroft (1560 ?–1630 ?), though the last stage of Middle Scots must have been the literary dialect most familiar to his youthful ear, did not compose his most celebrated work until late in life. His previous writings included a tractate, *De Unione Insulæ Britannicæ* (1605), and a *History of the House of Wedderburn* (1611).[1] He also wrote Latin verse with correctness and elegance, his effusions in which kind were collected, after his death, in 1639. But he is chiefly remembered as the historian of the House of Douglas, to which he was allied by blood, and for which he evinces a laudable, or at least intelligible, partiality. Severe history scarcely confirms his description of that notorious family as one "whose love to their country, fidelity to their king (!), and disdain of English slavery (!) was so naturall and of such force and vigour, that it had power to propagate itself from age to age, and from branch to branch, being not onely in the stocke, but in the collaterall." Having been private secretary to Archibald, eighth Earl of Angus, Hume probably enjoyed exceptional facilities for compiling his memorials of the house, and for putting the best face upon a record which could scarcely afford not to be apologetic in the literal sense of that word. But his *History of the House and*

[1] Ed. Miller, Abbotsford Club, 1839.

Race of Douglas and Angus (1644),[1] published by his gifted daughter Anna Hume,[2] is attractive, not for its intrinsic accuracy or trustworthiness, but for the trenchant and manly style in which it is composed. Few contemporary works surpass it in straightforwardness and vigour, and Hume had little need to deprecate the displeasure of those whom he expected to carp at "the stile, the phrase, the periods, the diction, and language" of his book. The following passage, which is the exordium of Part I., strikes a note that is well sustained until the peroration is reached—a fine piece of writing, but too long for presentation here :—

"Touching the original of this illustrious family and name of Douglas, we must not looke for an exact and infallible demonstration ; things of this nature are not capable of it. Great antiquity is commonly accompanied with much incertainty, and the originalls even of Cities, countries, and nations are grounded (for the most part) upon no surer foundation than conjecturall proofs, whose beginnings are more easily known, and better remembered, than those of private families. In such cases we use to take that for truth which comes nearest to it amongst diverse narrations ; and must rest on that which is most probable and apparent. *Quis rem tam veterem pro certo affirmet?* sayes the historian in a matter not unlike. And we will say with the same authour, *Cura non decesset, si qua ad verum via inquirentem ferret : nunc famæ standum est, ubi certam deroget vetustas fidem* (*Liv. lib. 7 de Iacu Curtio*). The beginning of our nation, yea of both nations (Scots and English) such as they now are, or of those that were before (Picts and Brittans), is not yet sufficiently cleared : neither is it as yet fully known from what people they are sprung, or how they got their name of Scots, English, Picts and Britans ; although the learned have bestowed their pains and imploied their pens on this subject, to the wearying but not satisfying of the reader. As for Scotland, Mr. *Cambden* grants so much, and mocks those that have laboured in it : yet hath he himself bestowed his time and pains

[1] The 1657 title-page of the first part of the work bears the name of *A generall History of Scotland*. Another family history of later date, the *Memoire of the Somervilles* (1679), by James, eleventh Lord Somerville (d. 1690), is one of the most interesting works of its kind which we possess.

[2] She translated Petrarch's *Triumphs of Love, Chastitie, and Death* (1644).

to as small purpose in behalf of his country-men the Brittans. Neither hath he done anything, save that by his fruitles attempt (notwithstanding all his bragging) he hath made it appear that to go about it is but to labour in vain; he himself (after his travell) remaining no lesse sceptick, and (to use his own words) Scotizing than others. And even Rome itself (the mistresse of the world), though the noontide of her empire be clear and bright, like the sunne in her strength, yet how misty is the morning and dawning thereof. Darknesse triumphs over the reigns and triumphs of her first kings; which are covered over with such uncertain obscuritie, or rather drowned in so profound and deep night of darknesse, that all her children (though they have beaten their brains, and spent much lamp-oyl in searching of it), could never clear their mother's nativity, or vindicate their father Romulus' birth from the fable of the incestuous vestall, nor his nursing from his being beholding to a she wolf." [1]

By a happy coincidence, we have in Spottiswoode and Calderwood two "official" historians (so to speak) of the Church, who present the facts one from the point of view of the moderate Episcopalian, the other from that of the orthodox and convinced Presbyterian. Spottiswoode's commission came from James VI., who bade him "speak the truth, man, and spare not," even on the delicate subject of Queen Mary's guilt. Calderwood's commission came from the General Assembly, after the overthrow of Episcopacy. It may fairly be said that both historians are a credit to the sides they represent. They do not pretend to absolute impartiality, a virtue which was impossible then, and is not easy even now. They naturally dwell upon the circumstances which tell in favour of their own views, and make light of such as tell against them. Yet neither was a wilful perverter of the truth, and, if Calderwood seems the more uncharitable in the judgments which he passes upon his opponents, we must remember that intolerance was "in the air," and that charity was never a favourite virtue with the stricter Presbyterians.

John Spottiswoode (1565–1639) was the son of the Spottis-

[1] *History of the house and race of Douglas and Angus*, p. 1.

woode well known as "superintendent" of the Lothians during the first Reformation. From the cure of the parish of Calder he passed to the Episcopal chair of Glasgow, whence he was translated to St. Andrews in 1615. He was the man most closely identified with the first Episcopacy, which lasted from 1610 to 1638, and it was under pressure from him that the five articles of Perth were adopted by the General Assembly of 1618. Yet Spottiswoode was no fanatic, and he was wise enough to mistrust, though not strong enough to defeat, the policy of Charles I., which brought about the downfall of Episcopacy and the Archbishop's deposition in 1638. The brief remainder of his life was spent in London. His *History of the Church of Scotland*,[1] originally published in 1655, is less pugnacious than Calderwood's work, and Spottiswoode excels in the grace and delicacy with which he analyses some complex character which a more furious partisan would represent as wholly good or wholly evil. Is there, for example, much more to be said about Mary Stuart than what is here set forth in a couple of sentences ?

"This was the end of Queen Mary's life; a princess of many rare virtues, but crossed with all the crosses of fortune, which never any did bear with greater courage and magnanimity to the last. Upon her return from France, for the first two or three years, she carried herself most worthily; but then giving ear to some wicked persons, and transported with the passion of revenge for the indignity done unto her in the murder of David Rizzio her secretary, she fell into a labyrinth of troubles, which forced her to flee into England, where after nineteen years' captivity, she was put to death in the manner you have heard."[2]

But he is not good in his reflective or critical moments alone. His power of narrative is considerable, and he recounts an episode like the following with no little spirit :—

[1] Ed. Russell, 3 vols., Spottiswoode Society, 1847–51.
[2] *History of the Church of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 361.

"The king, perceiving by all these letters that the death of his mother was determined, called back his ambassadors, and at home gave order to the ministers to remember her in their public prayers, which they denied to do, though the form prescribed was most Christian and lawful; which was, that it might please God to illuminate her with the light of his truth, and save her from the apparent danger wherein she was cast. Upon their denial, charges were directed to command all bishops, ministers, and other office-bearers in the Church to make mention of her distress in their public prayers, and commend her to God in the form appointed. But of all the number, only Mr. David Lindsay at Leith, and the king's own ministers gave obedience. At Edinburgh, where the disobedience was most public, the king, purposing to have their fault amended, did appoint the third of February for solemn prayers to be made in her behalf, commanding the bishop of St. Andrews to prepare himself for that day; which when the ministers understood, they stirred up Mr. John Cowper, a young man not entered as yet in the function, to take the pulpit before the time and exclude the bishop. The king coming at the hour appointed and seeing him in the place, called to him from his seat, and said, 'Mr. John, that place is destined for another; yet, since you are there, if you will obey the charge that is given, and remember my mother in your prayers, you shall go on.' He replying, 'That he would do as the Spirit of God should direct him,' was commanded to leave the place; and making as though he would stay, the captain of the guard went to pull him out; whereupon he burst forth in these speeches: 'This day shall be a witness against the king in the great day of the Lord;' and then denouncing a wo to the inhabitants of Edinburgh, he went down, and the bishop of St. Andrews, entering the pulpit, did perform the duty required. The noise was great for a while amongst the people; but after they were quieted, and had heard the bishop (as he was a most powerful preacher), out of that text to Timothy, discourse of the duty of Christians in praying for all men, they grieved sore to see their teachers so far overtaken, and condemned their obstinacy in that point. In the afternoon, Cowper was called before the Council, where Mr. Walter Balcanquhel and Mr. William Watson, ministers of the town, accompanying him, for some idle speeches that escaped them at that time, were both discharged from preaching in Edinburgh during his Majesty's pleasure, and Cowper sent prisoner to Blackness."[1]

We see here what sort of persons James VI. had to deal

[1] *History of the Church of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 355.

with—headstrong, hot-brained fanatics, who believed in their own immediate inspiration. Our last extract lets us see the sacred work of destruction in full swing :—

"This was the policy desired to be ratified. It had been framed by John Knox partly in imitation of the Reformed Churches of Germany, partly of that which he had seen in Geneva. Whence he took that device of annual deacons for collecting and dispensing the church-rents, whereof in the sixth head he speaketh, I cannot say. A nobleman being asked his judgment thereof, answered, that it was a devout imagination, wherewith John Knox did greatly offend; yet was it no better than a dream, for it could never have taken effect. The churchmen that went before had been provident enough in these matters, and good had it been for those that succeeded to have kept fast that which they found established to their hand, as the Archbishop of St. Andrews did at the same time advise them. For he, employing John Brand, a monk of Halyrudhouse (who served many years after, minister at the Canongate), to go unto John Knox, willed him to say from him: 'That albeit he had innovated many things, and made a reformation of the doctrine of the Church, whereof he could not deny but there was some reason; yet he should do wisely to retain the old policy, which had been the work of many ages, or then put a better in place thereof before he did shake off the other. "Our Highlandmen," he said, "have a custom, when they will break young colts, to fasten them by the head with two strong tethers, one of which they keep ever fast till the beast be thoroughly made. The multitude, that beast with many heads, should just be so dealt with. Master Knox, I know, esteemeth me an enemy; but tell him from me he shall find it true that I speak.'

"The Estates always, not thinking it meet to enter at that time in examination of the policy, deferred the same to a more convenient season; only an Act was passed for demolishing cloisters and abbey churches, such as were not as yet pulled down; the execution whereof was, for the west parts, committed to the Earls of Arran, Argyle, and Glencarne; for the north to Lord James; and for the in-countries to some barons that were held most zealous.

"Thereupon ensued a pitiful vastation of churches and church-buildings throughout all parts of the realm; for every one made bold to put to their hands, the meaner sort imitating the ensample of the greater and those who were in authority. No difference was made, but all the churches were either defaced or pulled to the ground. The holy vessels, and whatsoever else men could make

gain of, as timber, lead, and bells, were put to sale. The very sepulchres of the dead were not spared. The registers of the church and bibliotheques were cast into the fire. In a word, all was ruined, and what had escaped in the time of the first tumult, did now undergo the common calamity; which was so much the worse, that the violences committed at this time were coloured with the warrant of public authority. Some ill-advised preachers did likewise animate the people in these their barbarous proceedings, crying out, 'That the places where idols had been worshipped ought by the law of God to be destroyed, and that the sparing of them was the reserving of things execrable;' as if the commandment given to Israel for destroying the places where the Canaanites did worship their false gods had been a warrant for them to do the like. The report also went that John Knox (whose sayings were by many esteemed as oracles), should in one of his sermons say, 'That the sure way to banish the rooks was to pull down their nests,' which words (if any such did escape him) were to be understood of the cloisters of monks and friars only, according to the Act passed in the Council. But popular fury once armed can keep no measure, nor do anything with advice and judgment."[1]

David Calderwood (1575–1650), minister of Crailing, was banished for his vigorous opposition to the innovations introduced into the worship and order of the Church by James VI. Taking refuge in Holland—a country whose ecclesiastical relations with Scotland in the seventeenth century were extremely intimate—he there published his *Altare Damascenum* (1623), an elaborate attack upon the Episcopal position. He returned to Scotland on the accession of Charles I., and began to accumulate materials for his *magnum opus*, so that he became in Baillie's words, a "living magazine of our ecclesiastical history." His *History of the Church of Scotland*[2] did not appear until 1678, when it was published, also in Holland. Calderwood is scarcely Spottiswoode's equal in coolness and breadth of judgment. But he is perhaps his superior in animation and vigour, and, certainly, in dramatic power. His account of his own examination before the King and Council in

[1] *History of the Church of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 371.
[2] Ed. Thomson, Wodrow Society, 8 vols., Edin., 1842–49.

1617 is extremely vivid, and I extract a portion of a similar scene in which Spottiswoode and Mr. David Dickson (*supra*, p. 260) are the principal actors :—

"The Bishop of St. Androes beganne where he endit, spewed out the malice of his mind against Mr. David's person and doctrine : he called him a schismatick, an Anabaptist, one that had misled them, and filled them with phantasie. But they were otherwise perswadit. Robert Broun, the toun-clerk, hearing the bishop's blasphemous railings, testified his miscontent by a creinge [shrug] of his shoulders. St. Androes perceiving, sayeth to him, 'What, are ye, Sir, are ye led away with the same vanitie also ? Reade the Scripture, reade St. James. Ye have the faith of God in respect of persons. Because your minister sayes so and so, ye will say so also.' They went out, told Mr. David what the bishops had desired them to doe, but did not as they desired, because they knew what was his resolution. Within a little space Mr. David is called in againe. The Bishop of St. Androes sayes to him, 'Thou art a rebell, a breaker of the fyft command, disobedient to the king and us, who may be your fathers both one way and other. Ye sall ride with a thicker backe before ye ding the king's crowne off his head.' Mr. David answeired, 'Farre may such a thought be from me. I am so farre from that, that by God's grace there sall not be a stroke come from the king's hand that sall divert my affection from him.' 'It is Puritane taile,' saith St. Androes. 'Ye call the king your king, but he must be ruled by you.' The Bishop of Aberdeene posed Mr. David with two questions : first, 'Whether will ye obey the king or not ?' Mr. David answeired, 'I will obey the king in all things in the Lord.' 'I told you that,' sayes Glasco. 'I knew he wold eike to his limitations.' Aberdeen's other question was, 'May not the king give this authoritie that we have to als manie sutors or tailours of Edinburgh, to sitt and sie whether ye be doing your duetie or not ?' 'My declinatour answeirs that,' said Mr. David. The Bishop of St. Androes, continuing in his railing against Mr. David his person and doctrine, 'The devill,' says he, 'will deceive, he will draw anew with him ; he has Scripture enough.' He called him knave and swinger, a young lade, one that as yit might have beene teaching bairnes in the schole. 'Thou knowest Aristotle,' sayes he, 'but thou hast not theologie.' Because he perceived Mr. David gave him noe stiles, but once called him 'Sir,' he gnashed his teethe, and sayeth, 'Ye might have called me My Lord, sir. Long syne when I was in Glasco, ye called me My Lord ; but I cannot

tell how you are become a Puritane now.' Mr. David stood silent all the time; once he lift up his eyes to heaven, which St. Androes called a proud looke. He answered at last, 'I have beene eight yeirs a regent in the Colledge of Glasco, and four yeirs a minister: these amongst whom I have lived knowes I am not the man ye call me. Say to my person what ye please; by God's grace it shall not touch me.' 'Ay,' said St. Androes, 'ye glorie in your suffering. There will be that will suffer more for a good caus than ye will doe for an evill.' 'Noe,' sayes Mr. David, 'I glorie not in my suffering; but if ye will trouble me, I hope to have peace in my suffering, as I said to the Bishop of Glasco in his own gallerie.' . . . . At length St. Androes gives out the sentence in these words: 'We deprive you of your ministrie at Irwine, and ordaine you to enter in Turreff, in the North, within twentie dayes.' 'The will of the Lord be done,' said Mr. David. 'Though you cast me off, yit the Lord will take me up. Send me where ye please. I hope my Master sall goe with me; and as he hath beene with me heirtofore, he will be with me still as with his owne weake servant.' 'Sweith away!' said the bishop, as if he had been speaking to a dogge; 'Pack, you swinger!' and crying to the doore-keeper, he sayes, 'Shoote him out!' Robert Broun, toun-clerk of Irwin, when they were to goe furth, had these speeches: 'Is that dooleful sentence of divorcement pronounced? As for you, Mr. David, the Lord strengthen you to suffer; but as for you, sirs,' turning him to the bishops, 'God turne all your hearts.' With these words they are turning their backs and going out. St. Androes cryes, 'Who is that? I sall take order with you, sir.' So endit that graceless convention."[1]

Equally impressive, in a somewhat different vein, is his narrative of the death of Knox:—

"Upon Moonday, the 24th of November, he rose about nine or tenne houres, and yitt was not able to stand by himself; put on his hose and his doublett, and satt in a chaire the space of halfe an houre, and then went to bed againe. Being asked by the good-man of Kinzeancleughe if he had anie paine, he answered, 'No great paine, but suche as, I trust, sall putt end to this battell'; and said to him, 'I must leave the care of my wife and childrein to you, to whom you must be a husband in my rowme.' After noone, he

[1] *History of the Kirk of Scotland, ut. sup.*, vol. vii. p. 538.

caused his wife read the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and when it was ended he said, 'Is not that a comfortable chapter?' A little after, he sayeth, 'I commend my soule, spirit, and bodie' (pointing up his three fingers) 'into thy hands, O Lord.' About five houres, he sayeth to his wife, 'Goe, read where I cast my first anker': and so, she read the 17th chapter of the Gospell according to Johne, and, after that, some sermons of Mr. Calvin's upon the Ephesians. About halfe houre to tenne, they went to the ordinar prayer, which being ended, Doctor Preston said unto him, 'Sir, heard yee the prayer?' He answered, 'I would to God that yee and all men heard them as I heard: I praise God for the heavenlie sound.' Then Robert Campbell of Kinzeancleuche sitteth doun before him on a stoole, and incontinent he sayeth, 'Now it is come!'—for he had givin a long sigh and sob. Then said Richard Bannatyne to him, 'Now, sir, the time yee have long called to God for, to witt, an end of your battell, is come; and seeing all naturall powers faile, give us some signe that yee remember upon the comfortable promises which yee have oft shewed unto us.' He lifted up his one hand, and incontinent therafter randered his spirit, about elleven houres at night.

"After this maner departed this man of God, the light and comfort of our kirk, a mirroure of godlinesse, a paterne to ministers for holie life, soundnesse in doctrine, and boldnesse in reproving vice. He had a mightie spirit of judgement and wisdome. The trouble never came to the kirk, after his entrie in publict preaching, but he foresaw the end thereof. Many things in particular did he foretell which came to passe, as I have specified before in their owne places. I adde, how he foretold the queene, becaus she would not come and heare the Word, that she sould be compelled to heare it, nill she, would she; and so she was, at her arraignment. *Item*, To her husband sitting in the king's seate in the Great Kirke, he said, 'Have yee, for the pleasure of that dame, cast the Psalmebooke in the fire? the Lord sall strike both head and taile.' Mr. Thomas Smeton, in the description of his life and death, sheweth that the death of the good Regent, the Erle of Murray, made a deepe impression in his heart; but the massacre of Parise did almost exanimat him; and giveth him this commendation: 'I know not if ever God placed in a fraile and weake little bodie a more godlie and greater spirit.' Beza calleth him 'The Apostle of the Scots,' and comprehendeth all his praises in few words, when he calleth him (in his *Icones*) 'GREAT Master Knox.'"[1]

[1] *History of the Kirk of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 237.

One more excerpt may be given, showing us the Kirk in the brief heyday of its power, and the beginnings of its decline :—

"This yeere 1596 is a remarkable yeere to the Kirk of Scotland, both for the beginning and for the end of it. The Kirk of Scotland was now come to her perfectioun, and the greatest puritie that ever she atteaned unto, both in doctrine and discipline, so that her beautie was admirable to forraine kirks. The assembleis of the sanctis were never so glorious nor profitable to everie one of the true members thereof, than in the beginning of this yeere. There was good appearance of further reformatioun of abuses and corruptiouns, which were espied, when the covenant of God was renued first in the Generall Assemblie, then in particular synods and presbytereis. There was also appearance of a constant platt, for providing perpetuall stipends to all the parish kirks within the countrie. But the devill, invying her happinesse and laudable proceedings, so inflammed both Papists and politicians, and stirred them up to disturbe her peace, and to deface so glorious a worke. The Papist perceaved there was no rest for him in Scotland, if her authoritie continued. The politicians feared their craft and trade (which is to use indifferentlie all men and meanes to effectuate their own aimes, and to sett themselves up, as it were, in the throne of Christ) sould be undone. Wheras now, she had gotten the apostat erles, Angus, Huntlie, and Erroll, forefaulted for an unnaturall and treasonable conspiracie with the Spaniard, and expelled out of the realme, and was setting herself to reforme whatsoever abuses and corruptions were perceaved in her members, and speciallie, against the re-entrie and reatauration of the said erles, by the craft and policie of politicians and dissembled Papists, she was forced to take herself to the defence of her owne liberteis, and of that holie discipline which was her bulwarke, and leave off farther persute of the excommunicated erles re-entering. For some thornie questiouns in points of discipline were devised, whereby her authoritie was in manie points called in doubt ; ministers were called before the counsell, to give a compt of their rebookes in sermoun, and to underly their censure ; the ministers of the kirk of Edinburgh, which was, in a maner, the watche-towre to the rest, were forced to lurke ; and that kirk, which shynned as a lampe to the rest of the kirks within the countrie, was darkenned, and no lesse danger appeared to threatin the like to the rest. In a worde, the end of this yeere began that doolefull decay and declynning of this kirk, which has continued to this houre, pro-

ceeding from worse to worse ; so that now we see such corruptioun as we thought not to have seen in our dayes." [1]

For the period succeeding that which chiefly occupies the attention of Spottiswoode and Calderwood, our most valuable authority is Robert Baillie (1599–1662),[2] minister of Kilwinning, and, for a short time at the close of his life, Principal of Glasgow College. Baillie is admitted to have been preeminently learned in an age when learning was a characteristic of the Scottish clergy ; he is said to have known twelve or thirteen languages ; and his Latin style is such as, in the opinion of Wodrow, might become the Augustan age. Yet was he modest withal, and blest with qualities of prudence and foresight not always associated with erudition. It was he who, at the Westminster Assembly, to which, as we have mentioned, he was sent as one of the Kirk's Commissioners, was solicitous to "eschew rupture with the Independents till we are more able for them" ;[3] but no stauncher Presbyterian ever breathed, as he proved not only by contributions to the literature of the question, such as *The Canterburian's Self-conviction* (1640) and *An Historical Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland* (1646),[4] but also by the line of policy he took in the distracted times which followed the King's execution. Baillie bitterly deplored the internal dissensions of the Church and the Nation, which

[1] *History of the Kirk of Scotland, ut sup.*, vol. v. p. 387. With great works like Spottiswoode's or Calderwood's it would be absurd to compare the *Historie of the Church* by the able and excellent Patrick Simpson, minister of Stirling (d. 1618), which is more like a collection of materials for such a work than the work itself ; or the *Annales of Scotland* of that great antiquarian Sir James Balfour (d. 1657), which is incoherent and abrupt ; or even the *Historia rerum Britannicarum* (1572–1628), of Robert Johnston (1567 ?–1630), the first complete edition of which appeared in 1655, though a translation of a portion had been published in 1646.

[2] See Carlyle, *Works*, Cent. Ed. vol. xxix. p. 226.

[3] *Letters, ut infra*, vol. ii. p. 117.

[4] A full list of Baillie's printed works will be found at the end of vol. i. of Laing's ed. of the *Letters, ut infra*.

had justified Cromwell in assuring "his brethren in evil of a more easy conquest of Scotland than all the English kings ever had."[1] He was a strong Resolutioner, and refused to coquet with sectarianism. For this he incurred the resentment of the Protesters, and a latter-day "highflyer" does not hesitate to say that "we spew him out of our mouth at every page of his indispensable book."[2] Such is the touching fidelity with which the controversial methods of the Saints are copied by their successors.

The book in question is the Principal's *Letters and Journals* (1637–62),[3] and a delightful one it is. We get here intimate details of transactions which are not to be procured elsewhere, and pictures of scenes which other observers have failed to record for behoof of posterity. And everything is set down in the homely and nervous dialect of a private, or quasi-private, correspondence, for most of Baillie's papers were designed in the first instance for the eye of his cousin, Mr. William Spang, minister of the Scots Church at Campvere. How graphic and interesting is his account of the procedure of the Westminster Assembly!

"We meet every day of the week but Saturday. We sit commonlie from nine to one or two afternoon. The Proloqutor at the beginning and end hes a short prayer. The man, as the world knows, is very learned in the questions he hes studied, and very good, beloved of all, and highlie esteemed; but merelie bookish, and not much, as it seems, acquaint with conceived prayer, [and] among the unfittest of all the company for any action; so after the prayer he sitts mute. It was the canny convoyance of these who guides most matters for their own interest to plant such a man of purpose in the chaire. The one assessour, our good friend Mr. Whyte, hes keeped in of the gout since our coming; the other, Dr. Burgess, a very active and sharpe man, supplies, so far as is decent, the Proloqutors place.

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[1] *Letters, ut infra*, vol. iii. p. 68.

[2] Whyte, *Samuel Rutherford and some of his Correspondents, ut. sup.*

[3] Ed. Laing, 3 vols., Bannatyne Club, 1841.

Ordinarlie there will be present above threescore of their divines. These are divided in three Committees ; in one whereof every man is a member. No man is excluded who pleases to come to any of the three. Every Committee, as the Parliament gives order in wryte to take any purpose to consideratione, takes a portion, and in their afternoone meeting prepares matters for the Assemblie, setts downe their minde in distinct propositions, backs their propositions with texts of Scripture. After the prayer, Mr. Byfield, the scribe, reads the proposition and Scriptures, whereupon the Assemblie debates in a most grave and orderlie way. No man is called up to speak ; bot who stands up of his own accord, he speaks so long as he will without interruption. If two or three stand up at once, then the divines confusedlie calls on his name whom they desyre to hear first : On whom the loudest and maniest voices calls, he speaks. No man speaks to any bot to the Proloqutor. They harangue long and very learnedlie. They studie the questions well beforehand, and prepares their speeches ; but withall the men are exceeding prompt and well spoken. I doe marvell at the very accurate and extemporall replies that many of them usuallie doe make. When, upon every proposition by itself, and on everie text of Scripture that is brought to confirme it, every man who will hes said his whole minde, and the replyes, and duplies, and triplies, are heard : then the most part calls, To the question. Byfield the scribe rises from the table, and comes to the Proloqutor's chair, who from the scribe's book reads the proposition, and says, As many as are in opinion that the question is well stated in the proposition, let them say I ; when I is heard, he says, As many as think otherwise, say No. If the difference of I's and No's be cleare, as usuallie it is, then the question is ordered by the scribes, and they go on to debate the first scripture alleadged for proof of the proposition. If the sound of I and No be near equall, then sayes the Proloqutor, As many as say I, stand up ; while they stand, the scribe and others number them in their minde ; when they sitt down, the No's are bidden stand, and they likewise are numbered. This way is clear enough, and saves a great deal of time, which we spend in reading our catalogue. When a question is once ordered, there is no more debate of that matter ; but if a man will vaige, he is quicklie taken up by Mr. Assessor, or many others confusedlie crying, Speak to order, to order. No man contradicts another expresslie by name, bot most discreetlee speaks to the Proloqutor, and at most holds on the generall, The Reverend brother who latelie or last spoke, on this hand, on that syde, above, or below. I thought meet once for all to give you a taste of the outward form of their Assemblie. They follow the way of their

Parliament. Much of their way is good, and worthie of our imitation; only their longsomeness is wofull at this time, when their Church and Kingdome lyes under a most lamentable anarchy and confusion. They see the hurt of their length, but cannot get it helped; for being to establish a new Plattforme of worship and discipline to their Nation for all time to come, they think they cannot be answerable, if solidlie and at leisure, they doe not ecamine every point thereof."[1]

Here, too, is a glimpse of the wrestling of the Presbyterians with the Independents:—

"In our Assemblie, we go on as we may. The Independents and others keeped us long three weeks upon one point alone, the communicating at a table. By this we come to debate the diverse coming up of companies successively to a table; the consecrating of the bread and wine severallie; the giving of the bread to all the Congregation, and then the wine to all, and so twice coming up to the table, first for the bread, and then for the wine; the mutuall distribution, the table-exhortations, and a world of such questions, which to the most of them were new and strange things. After we were overtoyled with debate, we were forced to leave all these things, and take to generall expressions, which, by a benigne exposition, would infer our church-practices, which the most promised to follow, so much the more as we did not necessitate them by the Assemblie's express determinations. We have ended the matter of the Lord's supper, and these last three dayes have been upon Baptisme. We have carried, with much greater ease than we expected, the publickness of baptisme. The abuse was great over all this lande. In the greatest parosch in London, scarce one child in a year was brought to the church for baptisme. Also we have carried the parent's presenting of his child, and not their midwives, as was their universall custome. In our last debate with the Committee of Commons, for our paper of Ordination, we were in the midst, over head and ears, of that greatest of our questions, the power of the Parliament in ecclesiastick affairs. It's like this question shall be hotter here than anywhere else: but we mind to hold off; for yet it's very unseasonable. As yet we are come to no issue what to do with that paper."[2]

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[1] For Mr. William Spang, December 7, 1643, *Letters and Journals*, *ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 108.

[2] For Mr. Spang, July 12, 1644. *Letters and Journals*, *ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 204.

Lest such high matters should unduly fatigue his correspondent, they are diversified every now and then by the interposition of some more than usually pithy phrase, such as the description of Vossius' new book as "but a bag of clatters,"[1] or the communication of details affecting domestic life, in themselves of no moment, but made interesting for us by his mode of recounting them: as thus:—

"Sundrie heavie accidents have latelie fallen out amongst us. Bailie Walkinshaw's most prettie boy of four or five years old, on a Sunday afternoon, fell down his stair, and spoke no more, but died. Thomas Brown, late bailie, having supped, lay down and died before midnight. Thomas Main, our factor, at his breakfast weel, while he stretcht out his hand to the cup, is suddenlie overtaken with a palsie; spoke no more, but in a day or two dies. Thomas Robison, in Salcots, sitting at his own fire-side, is stobbed to death by a highlandman, put upon him by Pennimor, to get his goods to his son who had married Robison's daughter. A daughter of Mr. Archbald McLauchlane, minister at Lusse, a widow a very weel-favoured woman . . . was put in the tolbooth, where she hanged herself. Janet Hiegat in Falkirk, of a lewd life, vexed with a naughtie husband, did the like. . . . In Glenluss parish, in John Campbell a webster's house, for two or three yeares a spirit did whiles cast stones, oft fire the house, and cut the webs in the looms, yet did never any considerable harme. The man was a good, pious, resolut, man, and never left his house for all; sundrie ministers of the Presbyterie did keep fasting and praying in the house without molestation; sometyme it spoke, and the minister, Mr. John Scot, was so wise as to intertain large discourses with it. It were long to write all the passages: this twelvemonth it has been silent. A sturdie beggar, who had been a most wicked and avowed atheist, for which he was hanged at Dumfries, did oft lodge in that house; about his death it became more quiet, yet thereafter it became troublesome enough, but for the time is silent. There is much witcherie up and downe our lande; though the English be but too sparcing to try it, yet some they execute."[2]

Baillie, it will be perceived, did not rise superior to the

[1] *Letters, ut sup.*, vol. viii. p. 483.

[2] For Mr. William Spang, January 31, 1661, *Letters and Journals, ut sup.*, vol. iii. pp. 435, 436.

credulity of his age. The belief in witchcraft was at least as tenaciously held as any doctrine of the Christian religion, and the only difference (though it is one of some practical importance) between contending parties was that, while the Episcopalians were disposed not to add works to their faith, the Presbyterians were zealous in proportion to their fanaticism in seeking out and punishing by the most horrible methods persons alleged to be guilty of a crime against which the books of Moses denounce the penalty of death. This is a topic, however, which cannot here be pursued, and the reader may be referred, in illustration of contemporary feeling on the subject of the "supernatural" in its varied aspects, to the *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (1685),[1] of George Sinclair (1618–87), and *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies* (1691),[2] of Robert Kirk (1641–92).

To return to our historians and memoir writers. John Row (1568–1646), minister of Carnock, was yet another of those who chose the Kirk for their subject.[3] His *History* of that institution contains a short and useful account of the proceedings of the General Assemblies held within the period of which he treats; and he has preserved for us some Latin epigrams of Andrew Melville's. Without being specially lively or spirited, Row has some sense of humour; and he was, apparently, much amused by the mistake of an illiterate clergyman who mixed up *non liquet* with "deill be lickit."[4] John Spalding (1609 ?–1700), clerk of the Consistorial Court of the diocese of Aberdeen, is one of the best of our minor historians, and his *Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and in England* (1624–45),[5] is a valu-

[1] Reprinted 1871. [2] Ed. Jamieson, 1815; Lang, 1893.

[3] *The History of the Kirk of Scotland* from 1588 to 1637. With a continuation to 1639, by his son, John Row, Principal of King's College, Aberdeen; ed. Laing, Wodrow Soc., 1842.

[4] *History, ut sup.*, p. 287.

[5] Ed. Stuart, 2 vols., Spalding Club, 1850. The Spalding Club took its name out of compliment to his memory.

able record, written from the point of view of an Aberdonian and Episcopalian. On much the same plane is the *History of Scots Affairs 1637–41* [1] of James Gordon (1615 ?–86), parson of Rothiemay, a son of Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch and Pitlurg, who contributed the *Theatrum Scotiæ* to Blaeu's celebrated atlas, published at Amsterdam (1662–65). James Gordon himself was an eminent cartographer, and his maps of Edinburgh and Aberdeen are among his most celebrated performances in that department.[2] He was a man of character and learning, accustomed, we are told, to express strong sense in ordinary conversation in broad Scots, and a turn for "judicial astrology" was his chief foible. His narrative is plain, straightforward, and unadorned, yet pleasant to read, and quite trustworthy.

Robert Blair (1593–1666), a man of good family, who was one of the chaplains of Charles I., and ultimately became minister of St. Andrews, as being a proper person for "that high watch tower," has left us a small volume of *Memoirs*,[3] which are more concerned with private than with public affairs. Yet they are valuable for the light they shed upon one or two points of early Reformation practice, as well as for the warning they afford against inculcating upon a child a highly introspective form of religion. Thus we learn from him that in his boyhood Christmas was still observed: the "Holy days of Yule" were a time of rioting. Rigid Sabbatarianism had not yet become the rule: for his schoolmaster, after catechising his scholars on Sunday, dismissed them with express orders not to go to town, but to the fields to play. Also, "it was then the generally received

[1] Ed. Robertson and Grub, 3 vols., Spalding Club, 1841. His *Aberdoniae utriusque descriptio* was ed. for the same Club by Cosmo Innes, 1842.

[2] For a specimen of James Gordon's handiwork, see Mackay's *Fife and Kinross*, Edin., 1896. For a specimen of his father's, see Rampini's *Moray and Nairn*, Edin., 1897.

[3] Edin., 1754. The second part was written by Mr. William Row, of Ceres.

opinion that the Sacrament behoved to be received fasting." As for Blair himself, he was the son of a trader at Irvine, who "walked tenderly, refusing to enrich himself by buying commodities from Pirates." A more odious little prig than Robert never became the hero of a middle-Victorian "Sunday book." "Having, through indisposition," he tells us, "in the seventh year of my age, been left alone upon a Sabbath day, the Lord began to catechize me, and caused my conscience to pose me with this question, For what servest thou, unprofitable creature?" At the age of twelve, he insisted upon coming forward to the holy table. "This was the Lord's work to his poor child, to make me his covenanted and sealed servant." It is fair to say that he does not conceal his boyish escapades. Once, in the Christmas holidays, he amused himself by pretending to be drunk, though he was in reality "as fresh as at any time." He came home late, and, being challenged for staying at play till after supper, escaped a well-merited castigation by pretending that he had been mourning at his father's grave. In after life, he turned out a most respectable man, not very different in intellect and character from Mr. Micah Balwhidder, minister of Dalmailing, and we shall find that Wodrow has a particularly quaint and interesting anecdote to tell of him. He is one of the many men of his time who testify to the great influence deservedly wielded by Robert Boyd of Trochrig (1578–1627), the principal of Glasgow College.

John Livingstone (1603–1702), a scion of the noble house of that name, belonged to the extreme party which succeeded in eliminating the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the *Gloria Patri* from the services of the Kirk, and he is entitled to the distinction of being one of the first schismatics bred within the reformed communion of Scotland. He was banished after the Restoration, and the following fragment of a *Letter* addressed by him from Rotterdam to his old parishioners at Ancrum in 1671, sufficiently indicates of what spirit he was :—

"As for the poor wretch that is thrust in upon you, do not hate him, do not injure him; rather pray for him, and use means if it be possible, that he may recover, but do not countenance or join with him. Ye may easily be sensible he is not a messenger from the Lord for your spiritual good, but a snare and hardener of you in unwarranted ways. I may, by good ground from the word of God, affirm that, unless a gracious change be wrought, both he and all that follow him shall perish eternally. Now the Lord himself, who only can do it, open your eyes to see the danger of your way, urge and enable you to take some time to mourn before him in secret, and openly to testify, as occasion offers, before good and evil, that ye are returned to your former profession; then shall none of all your transgressions be mentioned unto you."[1]

Nevertheless, his *Life*,[2] written by himself, is worth attention, more especially for the *Memorable Characteristics* with which it concludes. The thumb-nail sketches of eminent ministers and "professors" are really good. John Nicoll (1590 ?–1667 ?), a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, was of quite anotherguess temperament. We can follow in his *Diary of Public Transactions* (1650–67)[3] the drift of current opinion without much difficulty. He deletes at a later date the unflattering epithets he had used about Montrose at the time of his execution; and, no sooner is Cromwell dead, than he ceases to be "his hyness, the Protector, a noble campion," and becomes "that tyrannous usurper and pretendit Protector," and "that old Traytor." It is the commonplace character of Nicoll's mind that makes his record so valuable. He notes the weather, the lateness of the harvest, the number of executions which have taken place, and so forth. All these trivialities bring the age before us with extraordinary vividness. We see, for example, that a crusade against barmaids is no novelty :—

"At the same tyme, for eschewing and downbearing of sin and filthiness in Edinburgh, it was actit that no woman sould vent or

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[1] *Letter to the Parishioners of Ancrum*, 1671, *apud Life*, app. iv. p. 185.
[2] Ed. Houston, 1848. [3] Ed. Laing, Bannatyne Club, 1836.

rin wyne or aill in the tavernis of Edinburgh, but allanerlie men servandis and boyes; quhilk act was red and publictlie intimat in all the kirkis of Edinburgh, that all such as haid these commodities to sell sould prepare men servandis and boyes for that use agane Witsounday nixt thaireftir following."[1]

After all, more than a decade of pure presbytery and covenant seems to have produced little tangible result in the way of improved morals:—

"Much falset and scheitting at this tyme [1650] was daylie detectit by the Lordis of Sessioun, for the quhilk thair wes daylie hanging, skurging, nailling of luggis, and binding of pepill to the Trone, and booring of tounges; so that it was ane fatall yeir for fals notaris and witnessis, as daylie experience did witnes." All sorts of other offences also "did nevir abound moir nor at this tyme."[2]

Nicoll, it will be seen, spelt in the fearless old fashion. He was moreover, tolerably well pleased with himself, and at ease in Zion, as was also John Lamont of Newton, whose *Diary*[3] (1649–71) is a more or less bald, but quite valuable, record of facts. Not so another diarist, Alexander Brodie of Brodie (1617–80),[4] who would fain have been a saint, but came very far short of that ideal, although he has been described as "a gentleman of shining piety." A considerable part of his *Diary* is given up to a full account of his spiritual conflicts; but a greater robustness of conscience and a more faithful adherence to the standards of common uprightness and honesty, might have done more for his spiritual welfare than his exaggerated and rather nauseous habit of self-examination. On matters of public interest, it should be said, Brodie often furnishes us with useful information. Equally rich in spiritual "experiences" is the *Diary*[5] of Alexander Jaffray

[1] *Diary ut sup.*, p. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[3] Ed. Kinloch, Maitland Club, 1830.

[4] *Diary*, ed. Laing, Spalding Club, 1863. It covers various periods from 1655 to 1680.

[5] Ed. John Barclay, 1833.

(1614–73), the Quaker provost of Aberdeen, who held high office during the usurpation of Cromwell.

The celebrated Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715) afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, was a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, and had served the cure of the parish of Saltoun and been Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow before a breach with Lauderdale made it desirable for him to cross the border. In England, however, the more important part of his life was passed, and his writings are indistinguishable in style and diction from those of contemporary Englishmen. There is nothing in them to remind us of his northern origin and breeding. It will, therefore, be enough merely to mention his *Vindication of the Authority, Constitution and Laws of the Church and State in Scotland* (1672), his *History of the Reformation* (1679-81–1714), and his posthumous *History of My Own Time* (1724–34); and to add a particular commendation of *Some Passages of the Life and Death of John, Earl of Rochester* (1681), and of the *Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale* (1682), a couple of excellent essays in the art of compendious biography. Two much more lowly, but perhaps more amusing, historians, must on no account be left unnoticed. James Kirkton (d. 1699), minister of Mertoun, was one of those who had "seen the glory of the former Temple," or, in other words, had been ordained before the Restoration. From the date of that event down to 1678 he gives us the *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*,[1] a work which derives its chief attraction not from the originality or authenticity of the serious information it imparts, but from the fact that it is a wonderful repository of demonology. The same observation may be made about the *Memorialls*[2] of Robert Law (d. 1689), though Law had perhaps more of a literary gift than Kirkton. His manner of introducing moral reflections or memoranda is

[1] Ed. Sharpe, 1817. There is appended to this ed. an *Account of the murder of Archbishop Sharp*, by James Russell, in Kettle, Fife, one of the murderers.

[2] Ed. Sharpe, 1818.

extremely ingenuous and quaint, as thus: "The new-made hangman (for the former hangman was executed for murdering a creeple blewgown, supposing to get money off him, covetousness the root of all evil").

Our list of ecclesiastical historians must close with the names of Patrick Walker and Robert Wodrow. Of Patrick Walker (166–? 1745) little that is certain is known, but he seems to be definitively cleared of the shocking charge of having been a travelling packman or pedlar. His *Lives*[1] of Peden (1724), Semple, Welwood, and Cameron (1727), and Cargill and Smith (1732), enjoyed at one time great, and not wholly undeserved, popularity. Walker is the possessor of a homely and vigorous style, and reminds one at times of an inferior Bunyan. His dialogue is often vivacious, and what is perhaps his most famous episode—the shooting of John Brown—is recounted, as Sir Walter Scott justly enough says, "with great simplicity and effect," though whether with accuracy or not is another matter. Here is a passage which will show that, whatever may be his faults, Walker does not err by any affectation of gracefulness or gentility :—

"All know that a fleece went off in the year 1712 to the embracing of that bundle of unhappy oaths, flowing from that same poisonable fountain of Erastianism, and the prelatical hierarchy (both abjured by solemn oaths before the Lord) that the indulgence flowed from. Many, tho' they refused them in the 1712, yet were gaping after them, some of which could have thrust down the cow (to wit, that bundle of oaths) but the tail stuck in their throats (viz. of taking these oaths 'heartily and willingly'); who, very Balaam-like, with bocking and gapping, with upstretched and outstretched necks and watry eyes, with their wives and other pretended friends by unhappy advices chapping hard upon their backs to help them down with the tail; and when they got all over they went off in two's and three's

[1] They were collected under the name of *Biographia Presbyteriana*, Edin., 1837, and again, under the name of *Six Saints of the Covenant*, ed. Hay Fleming, 1901.

at different times (some of whose names I could mention) like persons ashamed, doing an ill turn, not heartily and willingly as they all swear at the end of these oaths ; and then, in the 1719, there was a softning, soupling, sweetning oil, composed and made up by the cunning art of carnal wit and state-policy ; then all went over with ease, and yet nothing but an old tout in a new horn."—Walker, *Life of Cameron, Six Saints, ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 222.

Apart from style, the inestimable value of Walker's *Lives* consists in the appalling, because unconscious, *exposé* they make of the later Covenanters. We may disregard, if we please, lampoons like *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* (1692), though its substantial truth is attested by the storm of indignation it aroused. We may smile at the injudicious partisanship of Mark Napier, that—

> "fiery ettercap, a fractious chiel,
> As het as ginger, and as stieve as steel."

But we cannot ignore Walker, the enthusiastic admirer of the Saints. It is to him we must repair if we would learn the worst of the "persecuted" remnant. And what a worst it is! More like "Satan's invisible world discovered" than anything else. For those "old, exercised, singular, self-denied, tender, Christians" might indeed do credit to a pugnacious and crazy religion, whose main principle of conduct was to indulge the passion of revenge ; but, regard being had to the New Testament, the Covenanters are indeed the most "singular" Christians that ever were. The *a per se* of singularity is godly Mr. Alexander Peden, who would have made a model Mohammedan, though the statement must be qualified with an apology to the Prophet. Mr. Peden was never contradicted or opposed by any one without prophesying that the death of his opponent or contradictor should be "both sudden and surprising" : which of course it always proved to be. But he reaches his very highest point in the following speech, delivered to a humble follower with whom he had been

discussing the resurrection of the just : "And then, John, you and I and all that will be found having on Christ's righteousness, will get day about with them [the "malignants"], and give our hearty assent to their eternal sentence of damnation."[1] It would be unfair to lay any great stress on Walker's tales of showers of bonnets, hats, guns and swords, though by the time at which he was writing such palpably imbecile manifestations of divine power had ceased to be vouchsafed, or had ceased to be widely credited. What is worth insisting on is his obvious good faith, his denseness, his insensibility to the significance of the disclosures he was making. Had Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe edited him *more suo*, no one could have been surprised. That he should have been revived by a professed admirer of the Covenanters is indeed astounding. For the gratification of confirmed Walker-worshippers, I give this short passage, in taking leave of him, as a sort of manifesto of his views :—

"O for the sharp sight and clear eye, distinct and impartial pen of our leading staters, maintainers, and sealers of our sworn-to and sealed testimony, to draw up and set in clear view, a full catalogue of Scotland's sins from that day to this day; especially to discover the sins, snares, and defections of the present black infatuate bargain of Union, toleration, and patronages; but especially to rip up and lay in broad-band, the foul moniplyes of that bundle of these intricate, implicate, multifarious and unnecessary oaths imposed upon this nation and ministers of this Church, by the authority of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, with their foul, cunning, rotten distinctions, as *As's* and *Which's*, thereby swearing away a Presbyterian King from the throne of Britain, and submission to Erastianism and to the height of the usurped power of abjured Prelatical Hierarchy; being imposed, by their authority, upon the ministers of this Church, and that as they are ministers, without their consent, under the same penalty with civil officers in State and Army, who have their commissions and benefices from them: whereas ministers of the gospel hold neither of them; yet without submission to these unhappy

[1] Ed. 1901, *ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 64.

encrochments to be deprived of both office and benefice; contrair to an express act and declaration of the General Assembly in the year 1648 against all new oaths and bonds in the common cause, imposed without the consent of the Church, which they looked upon as a snare to the people of God, to involve them in guiltiness, and to draw them from their former principles and vows in the Solemn League and Covenant." [1]

Robert Wodrow (1679–1734) is probably the most industrious collector of facts and documents, and the most voluminous and discursive writer, among the historians of Scotland. His papers are to be found in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh and in the University Library of Glasgow. Those in the former are very extensive and are now in the act of being catalogued; those in the latter are estimated, on a rough calculation, to run to about 8,000 small quarto pages, of which perhaps seven-eighths have never been printed.[2] His published works embrace *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (1721–22) [3]; certain *Biographical Collections* relating to Churchmen connected with the North of Scotland [4]; a selection from his *Correspondence* [5]; and *Analecta, or materials for a history of remarkable providences*.[6]

Wodrow was an enthusiastic supporter of the "glorious and never-to-be-forgotten revolution," though he lived to see most melancholy defections in the Church at a later date. He complains in 1725 that Mr. Wishart's helpers at the Communion, and Mr. Wishart himself, preached the dangerous doctrine that the chief end of religion is to promote holiness, or the duties we owe to one another as members of a society; while the sacraments are principally to be regarded as helping on these. "No wonder," he exclaims indignantly, "no wonder

[1] Preface to *Life of Peden*. Ed. 1901, p. 8.

[2] I am indebted for these figures to the University Librarian, through the good offices Rev. Professor Cooper, D.D.

[3] Ed. Burns, 4 vols., Glasgow, 1829.

[4] Ed. Lippe, New Spalding Club, 1890.

[5] Wodrow Soc., 1842–43.

[6] Maitland Club, 4 vols., 1842.

these things make noise and grumblings." And he adds, menacingly, "Woe to them by whom offences do come!"[1] When it is added that he was as credulous as Walker, it may well be believed that "malignants" fare uncommonly ill at his hands. No story to their discredit is too improbable to be received by him with an eager welcome, and of anything like a critical method he is absolutely innocent. Yet there is a measure of candour and simplicity about him which engages our interest and almost our affection. In his account of Renwick's trial, for instance, he "gives away" that sturdy rebel most effectually. No self-respecting tribunal could have helped sending him to the gallows after his frank avowal of treason. Not that Wodrow is by any means a fool. He can see a point that tells in his favour as clearly as any man, and it is with unconcealed glee that he notes how, after the re-establishment of episcopacy in 1661, the clergy, most of whom were in Presbyterian orders, were not compelled to undergo re-ordination by a Bishop, though the new Bishops (to conform to the precedent of 1610) had been forced to submit to that ceremony in London. He has, moreover, a shrewd vein of humour, and his vignettes of these same prelates, if not exactly marked by an "over-extensive charity," are extremely cleverly executed. Here are a few of them :—

"Mr. Andrew Fairfoul got the archbishopric of Glasgow; a man of some learning and neat expression, but never taken to be either serious or sincere. He had been minister at Leith, and at this time was at Dunse, and in that country there was no small talking of his intrigues with a lady who shall be nameless; but death cut him off in little more than a year after his promotion as will be noticed afterwards.

"Mr. George Wischart is placed at the see of Edinburgh. He had been laid under Church censure by the old covenanters, about the time of the encampment at Dunselaw, in the year 1639, and this probably recommended him now. This man could not refrain

[1] *Analecta*, vol. iii. p. 240.

from profane swearing even upon the street of Edinburgh; and he was a known drunkard. He published somewhat in divinity; but then, as I find it remarked by a very good hand, his lascivious poems, which, compared with the most luscious parts of Ovid, *De arte amandi*, are modest,[1] gave scandal to all the world.

"Mr. Robert Wallace, minister at Barnwell in the shire of Ayr, famous for his large stomach, got the bishopric of the Isles, though he understood not one word of the language of the natives. He was a relation of the Chancellor's and that was enough.

"Mr. David Fletcher, minister at Melross, a remarkable worldling, was named for the bishopric of Argyle: I doubt if he understood the Irish language either. Melross was a good stipend, and he continued a while preaching there, and because of his preaching there he boasted of his diligence beyond the rest of his brethren, who, it must be owned, for the most part preached little or none; meanwhile, I do not hear any of them, save he, took two stipends.

. . . . . .

"Mr. Murdoch Mackenzie, minister at Elgin, was placed at Murray. While a minister, he was famous for searching people's kitchens on Christmas Day for the superstitious goose, telling them, that the feathers of them would rise up in judgment against them one day; and when a bishop, as famous for affecting always to fall a preaching upon the deceitfulness of riches, while he was drawing the money over the board to him.

"Mr. Robert Leighton, once minister of Newbottle, and at this time principal of the College of Edinburgh, son to Mr. Leighton in England, the author of 'Zion's plea against Prelacy,' who was so severely handled by the prelates there, made choice of the small bishopric of Dunblane, to evidence his abstractedness from the world. His character was by far the best of any of the bishops now set up: and to give him his due, he was a man of very considerable learning, an excellent utterance, and of a grave and abstracted conversation. He was reckoned devout, and an enemy to persecution, and professed a great deal of meekness and humility. By many he was judged void of any doctrinal principle, and his close correspondence with some of his relations at Doway in popish orders, made him suspected as very much indifferent as to all professions which bear the name of Christian. He was much taken with some of the Popish mystic writers, and indeed a latitudinarian, and of an over extensive charity. His writings

[1] *Sic.* The worthy minister obviously means to say "compared with which," &c.

published since the revolution, evidence his abilities, and that he was very much superior to his fellows."

The *Analecta*, which were not designed for publication in their present shape, contain the cream of his work, and are most instructive as to the manners and modes of thought which prevailed in Wodrow's day. Few books of the kind have in store a more ample reward for him who knows how to dip judiciously. I cannot refrain from quoting once again the famous tale of the divinity student and Mr. Robert Blair (*supra*, p. 291), in which the author's turn for story-telling is displayed to great advantage, and which must certainly have been known to the author of the *Justified Sinner* (*infra*, p. 531).

"When Mr. Robert Blair was minister of St. Andrews, there was a youth who applied to that Presbytery to be admitted to trials. Though he was very unfit, the Presbytery appoints him a text; and after he had been at all the pains he could in consulting help, yet he got nothing done, so that he turned very melancholy; and one day as he was walking all alone in a remote place from St. Andrews, there came up to him a stranger in habit like a minister, with black coat and band, and who addressed the youth very courteously; and presently falls into discourse with him after this manner: 'Sir, you are but a young man, and yet appear to be very melancholy; pray, why so pensive? May I presume to enquire what it is that troubles you?' He answered, 'It's to no purpose to communicate my mind to you, seeing you cannot help me!' 'How know you that? Pray let me know the cause of your pressure.' Says the youth, 'I have got a text from the Presbytery. I cannot for my life compose a discourse on it, so I shall be affronted.' The stranger replied, 'Sir, I am a Minister, let me hear the text.' He told him. 'O! then I have ane excellent sermon on that text here in my pocket, which you may peruse and commit to your memory. I engage after you have delivered it before the Presbytery you shall be greatly approven and applauded.' So pulls it out and gives it him, which he received very thankfully. Then says the stranger, 'As I have obliged you now, Sir, so you will oblige me again in doing me

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[2] *History*, bk. ii., ch. i. ed. *cit.* vol. i, p. 236.

any piece of kindness or service when my business requires it." Which the youth promises. 'But, Sir,' says the stranger, 'you and I are strangers, and, therefore, I would require of you a written promise, subscribed with your hand, in case you forget the favour which I have done you.' Which he granted likewise, and delivered it to him subscribed with his blood. And thus they parted.

"Upon the Presbytery day the youth delivered ane excellent sermon upon the text appointed him, which pleased and amazed the Presbytery to a degree; only Mr. Blair smelt out something which made him call the youth aside to a corner of the church, and thus he began with him: 'Sir, you have delivered a neat sermon, every way well pointed. The matter was profound, or rather sublime, your style was fine and your method clear; and no doubt young men at the beginning must make use of helps which I doubt not but you have done.' [By artful cross-examination Mr. Blair then elicits the facts of the interview with the mysterious stranger, and having so done] 'with ane awful seriousness appearing in his countenance, began to tell the youth his hazard, and that the man whom he took for a Minister was the Divel, who had trepanned him and brought him into his net." [Mr. Blair next tells the story to the Presbytery, who resolve to meet next day in one of the most retired churches within the bounds, "taking the youth alongst with them."] "Which was done, and after the ministers had prayed all of them round, except Mr. Blair, who prayed last, in the time of his prayer, there came a violent rushing of wind upon the Church, so great that they thought the Church should have fallen down about their ears, and with that the youth's paper and covenant droops down from the roof of the Church among the ministers! I heard no more of the story. My author is Mr. J. G. formerly mentioned." [1]

Compared with the genuine Wodrow, subsequent imitators like John Howie of Lochgoin [2] (1735–93), though extravagant and absurd enough, are dull and savourless, for all their desperate efforts to grind out the old tune.

One great feature in the Scottish society of the seven-

[1] *Analecta*, vol. i. p. 102.

[2] Author of *Scots Worthies* (1775 and 1781), ed. Carslaw, Edin., 1870. It is significant that the modern editor omits an appendix containing an account of the wicked lives and miserable deaths of some of the most notable apostates and persecutors.

teenth century is the entire absence of a literary class as it existed even then in London—a class whose prime business was writing and which depended for a living upon the earnings of the pen. Differentiation of functions in Scotland had not yet been carried so far. Men were divines, or lawyers, or doctors, or country gentlemen, or courtiers; they might also be men of letters, but literature was not their calling. Thus there was a remarkable diffusion of general culture among the learned professions. The Universities amply justified their existence. At no time have they been more prolific of really erudite men; and the University of Aberdeen, in particular, has never boasted so many distinguished sons. Nor was it only at home that the high standard set by these institutions was recognised and appreciated. Scholars from Scotland wandered over most of Europe, and found appropriate havens for themselves in the hospitable Universities of the Continent.[1] Such an one perhaps was William Bellenden (1566?–1630?), Professor of Humanity in the University of Paris, whose curious mosaics from the works of Cicero [2] are surmised to have been pillaged to good purpose, nearly a century and a half later, by Conyers Middleton. Another was John Cameron (1580–1626), who spent the greater part of his life as a teacher of philosophy in France.

But to enumerate all the Scotsmen who adorned their Sparta by their attainments in the varied arts of peace is neither possible nor necessary: not possible, for their name was Legion; not necessary, for they commonly wrote in Latin. Of all the professions, it was perhaps that of medicine which covered itself with the greatest glory, next to that of divinity. One admirable illustration of the man of science we have seen in Dr. Pitcairne, though it is not that side of his achievement

[1] See on this point Burton, *The Scot Abroad*, Edin., 1864, new ed. 1881; and Fischer, *The Scots in Germany*, Edin., 1902.

[2] *Ciceronis Princeps*, Paris, 1608; *Ciceronis Consul*, Paris, 1612; *De tribus luminibus*, Paris, 1633.

which we considered. Other specimens are Dr. Robert Baron (1593?–1639); Dr. Robert Morison (1620–83), whom Charles II. appointed to be Professor of Botany at Oxford; and, best of all, Sir Robert Sibbald (1641–1722), the founder of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, in 1681, and highly distinguished alike as a botanist, a naturalist, and an antiquarian. He wrote largely on the Roman remains in Scotland, commemorated Sir James Balfour in a valuable Latin monograph, composed a *History, Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross* (1710), and left behind him a library, of which the catalogue (1722) is extremely interesting, and an *Autobiography*,[1] which should not lightly be exchanged for any of his more learned writings.

But no better instances could be offered of the "unprofessional" character of Scottish literature, so to speak, than the two illustrious men with some notice of whom this long chapter must be brought to a conclusion. Sir George Mackenzie, of Rosehaugh [2] (1636–91), the founder of the Advocates' Library, was a man of the highest ability and character, though the popular voice has most unfairly affixed to his name the epithet "bloody." He was, indeed, a strong supporter of the Royal prerogative, but there is no evidence that he ever took undue advantage as public prosecutor of men brought to the bar for a crime which they scarcely troubled themselves to deny. The list of his writings is a striking testimony to the versatility of his talents. What his "serious romance," *Aretina* (1660), may be like, I have had no opportunity of judging, and am content to rest satisfied with his editor's verdict, that it is "a very bright specimen of a gay and exuberant genius." Of his poetry I give a few lines; which appear to show that he by no means studied to avoid conceits. The piece is entitled *Our Saviour's Picture.*

[1] The *Autobiography* will be found in Maidment's *Analecta Scotic* (2 vols., Edin., 1834–37), vol. i. p. 126.

[2] *Works*, 2 vols., Edin., 1716–22.

"Our Saviour there so living seems to be,
He Calvin could oblige to bow his knee;
The painter cut so deep His bleeding wounds,
That art and grief both please us and confounds:
Yet, Lord, when I these wounds thus bleeding see
I must conclude they bleed at sight of me;
I in Thy death o'er-act this fatal part
Who pierc'd Thy side, for I do pierce Thy heart." [1]

His ethical writings include the *Religio Stoici* (1663), a *Moral Essay upon Solitude* (1665), *Moral Gallantry* (1667), designed to prove that the point of honour "obliges men to be virtuous, and that there is nothing so mean (or so unworthy of a gentleman) as vice," and the *Moral History of Frugality* (1691). His political writings embrace the *Jus Regium* (1684), and a *Vindication of the Government of Charles II.* (1691). His treatise on Heraldry will probably be admitted to be of less moment than his posthumous *Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland from the Restoration*,[2] which are of considerable utility to the historian. Perhaps, after all, his profession occupied most of his thoughts. He was not ashamed of what he called "the idiom of my trade," and it is to Mackenzie the advocate that we owe the treatise on the *Laws and Customs of Scotland in matters Criminal* (1678), the *Observations* (1686), a running commentary on the statute-law of Scotland, and the *Institutions* (1684), whose authority would doubtless stand higher, had they not been thrown into the shade by the immortal *Institutions of the Law of Scotland* [3] (1681), of his political opponent, James Dalrymple, Viscount Stair [4] (1619–95). Stair has, however, been forgotten as a vindicator of the *Divine Perfections* (1695).

Mackenzie has little that is characteristically Scotch in his style or language, and it seems probable that, as he himself bears witness, the language of the greater nobility of Scotland

[1] *Caelia's Country House and Closet.* By Sir George Mackenzie *apud* Watson. Part ii. p. 71.

[2] Edin., 1821.

[3] Ed. More, 2 vols., 1832.

[4] *Memoir*, by Æ. J. G. Mackay, Edin., 1873.

and of those in high places was not marked off by any great differences from that of Whitehall. Yet he was quite prepared to defend the peculiarities of Scottish speech, as the following extract from the essay on forensic eloquence prefixed to his *Pleadings* (1673) will show :—

"It may seem a paradox to others, but to me it appears undeniable, that the Scottish idiom of the British tongue is more fit for pleading than either the English idiom or the French tongue; for certainly a pleader must use a brisk, smart, and quick way of speaking; whereas the English, who are a grave nation, use a too slow and grave pronunciation, and the French a too soft and effeminate one. And therefore, I think the English is fit for haranguing, the French for complimenting, and the Scots for pleading. Our pronunciation is like ourselves, fiery, abrupt, sprightly, and bold; their greatest wits being employed at Court, have indeed enriched very much their language as to conversation; but all ours bending themselves to study the law, the chief science in repute with us, hath much smoothed our language as to pleading: And when I compare our law with the law of England, I perceive that our law favours more pleading than theirs does; for their statutes and decisions are so full and authoritative, that scarce any case admits pleading, but (like a hare killed in the seat) 'tis immediately surprised by a decision or statute. Nor can I enough admire why some of the wanton English undervalue so much our idiom, since that of our gentry differs little from theirs; nor do our commons speak so rudely as these of Yorkshire. As to the words wherein the difference lies, ours are for the most part old French words, borrowed during the old league betwixt our nations, as *cannel* for *cinnamon*, and *servit* for *napkin*, and a thousand of the like stamp; and if the French tongue be at least equal to the English, I see not why ours should be worse than it. Sometimes also our fiery temper has made us, for haste, express several words into one, as *stour* for *dust in motion; sturdy* for *an extraordinary giddiness*, &c. But generally words *significant ex instituto;* and therefore one word is hardly better than another: their language is invented by courtiers, and may be softer, but ours by learned men and men of business, and so must be more massy and significant; and for our pronunciation, beside what I said formerly of its being more fitted to the complexion of our people than the English accent is, I cannot but remember them, that the Scots are thought the nation under heaven who do with most ease learn to pronounce best the French,

Spanish, and other foreign languages, and all nations acknowledge that they speak the Latin with the most intelligible accent; for which no other reason can be given, but that our accent is natural, and has nothing, at least little, in it that is peculiar. I say not this to asperse the English, they are a nation I honour, but to reprove the petulancy and malice of some amongst them who think they do their country good service when they reproach ours."[1]

The whole Essay is curious and instructive. It illustrates the then diverse conventions of the English and Scottish bars, and gives a hint of that tradition of "eloquence" which, as we shall see, operated so powerfully in the prose literature of Scotland during the succeeding century.

With the name of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1655–1716) the literary history of Scotland prior to the Union of the Parliaments comes to an appropriate termination. Fletcher is well known as the most stalwart opponent of that momentous transaction. But there is nothing distinctively national—still less "nationalist"—in his style of composition. He is remarkable because of the freshness and vigour of intellect which, in middle life, he brought to bear upon social and political problems which will always be with us.[2] His views may remind us in some respects of Colonel Newcome's, and in others of Cobbett's, but they are powerfully advocated, and carefully thought out. To construct a coherent political theory or system out of them might be difficult, and is, at all events, a task which cannot be attempted here. We can only indicate a few of his opinions in detail. He was strongly opposed to a standing mercenary army, but (quite in the spirit of the old Scots Acts) he thought that, at the age of twenty-two, every able-bodied man in the nation should begin a

[1] From the preface to the *Pleadings*.

[2] See his collected *Political Works*, 1737. The most important are the *Two Discourses Concerning the Affairs of Scotland* (1698). For the correct version and interpretation of his celebrated apophthegm about the ballads and the laws of a nation, see *Chambers's Cyclopædia of Literature*, vol. i. (1901), p. 828.

course of strict military training, to last for two years. He recognised clearly the obstacle then presented by the Highlands to any satisfactory settlement of Scots affairs, and he had all the Lowlander's dislike of Donald. One half of the whole country, he complains, is possessed "by a people who are all gentlemen only because they will not work; and who in everything are more contemptible than the vilest slaves, except that they always carry arms, because for the most part they live upon robbery."[1] To remedy this he put forward a most elaborate scheme for the agrarian reorganisation of Scotland. His most startling proposal is one for the institution of a modified and restricted type of slavery. Perhaps his admiration of the Ancients had something to do with such a suggestion, of the daring character of which he was well aware.

"I doubt not that what I have said will meet, not only with all the misconstruction and obloquy, but all the disdain, fury, and outcries, of which either ignorant magistrates, or proud, lazy, and miserable people are capable. Would I bring back slavery into the world? Shall men of immortal souls, and by nature equal to any, be sold as beasts? Shall they and their posterity be for ever subjected to the most miserable of all conditions; the inhuman barbarity of masters, who may beat, mutilate, torture, starve, or kill so great a number of mankind at pleasure? Shall the far greater part of the commonwealth be slaves, not that the rest may be free but tyrants over them? With what face can we oppose the tyranny of princes, and recommend such opposition as the highest virtue, if we make ourselves tyrants over the greatest part of mankind? Can any man from whom such a thing has once escaped, ever offer to speak for liberty? But they must pardon me if I tell them, that I regard not names, but things; and that the misapplication of names has confounded everything. We are told there is not a slave in France; that when a slave sets his foot upon French ground, he becomes immediately free: and I say that there is not a freeman in France, because the King takes away any part of any man's property at his pleasure; and that, let him do what he will to any man, there is no remedy. The Turks tell us, there are no slaves among them, except Jews, Moors, or Christians; and who is there who knows

[1] *Second Disc.*, p. 150.

not, they are all slaves to the Grand Scignior, and have no remedy against his will? A slave properly is one who is absolutely subjected to the will of another man without any remedy: and not one that is only subjected under certain limitations, and upon certain accounts necessary for the good of the commonwealth, though such an one may go under that name. And the confounding these two conditions of men by a name common to both has, in my opinion, been none of the least hardships put upon those who ought to be made servants. We are all subjected to the laws: and the easier or harder conditions imposed by them upon the several ranks of men in society make not the distinction that lies between a freeman and a slave." [1]

Whether the project be good or bad, there can be no doubt, if we take Fletcher's word for it, that the economical circumstances of Scotland at the time justified an interested observer in casting about for radical measures of reform.

"There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church-boxes, with others who, by living upon bad food, fall into various diseases) two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. These are not only no way advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of those vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land, or even those of God or nature. . . . No magistrate could ever discover or be informed, which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptised. Many murders have been discovered among them; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants (who, if they give not bread or some kind of provision to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them), but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like publick occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together.

[1] *The Second Discourse, &c.*, p. 130.

"These are such outrageous disorders that it were better for the nation they were sold to the Gallies or West-Indies, than that they should continue any longer to be a burden and curse upon us." [1]

It is a singular illustration of the irony of human affairs that the remedy for this alarming state of matters should have been implicit in that very legislative enactment which Fletcher did his utmost to defeat. He was not an infallible prophet; which indeed it is given to few to be. But whether he was right or wrong in his opinions, correct or mistaken in his forecasts, he is well worth studying both for the independence of the views which he presents, and for the uncompromising energy with which he asserts them.

[1] From *The Second Discourse, &c.*, p. 144.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUGUSTAN AGE: PROSE

We are not here directly concerned with the political, economical, and social consequences of the sad and sorrowful Union. Neither the inflammation of reckonings nor the diminished size of pint stoups must divert our attention; and it is unnecessary to dwell upon the risks to which an honest man became exposed from gaugers and excisemen in the innocent act of fetching a bit anker of brandy from Leith to the Lawnmarket. We may note, however, incidentally that the Union of the Parliaments gave the critical impulse to a movement which began a century before with the Union of the Crowns. The exodus of the greater Scottish nobility from the Scottish capital went on apace, so that early in the nineteenth century Dr. Peter Morris could assure his correspondent that "there is scarcely one of the *première noblesse* that retains even the appearance of supporting a house in Edinburgh; and by far the greater part of them are quite as ignorant of it as of any other provincial town in the island."[1] After 1707, professional and business men began to seek in England, and particularly in London, the opening for their abilities which their native country was unable to afford. Both in the West end of the town and in the City there was

[1] *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 3 vols. Edin., 1819, vol. i. p. 212.

a busy and influential colony of Scots doctors towards the middle of the eighteenth century; among them, Cheyne, Clephane, and Armstrong. Millar, perhaps the leading publisher of his age, was a Scot, and so were Strahan and Murray. The most successful literary hacks of their day, Smollett and Campbell, came from beyond the Tweed. Even at the bar, the competition of the immigrants became really formidable. The outburst of hatred against everything Scotch which marked the decade between 1760 and 1770 was an expression of feelings which had doubtless been smouldering for many years. Hume is never tired of railing against "the factious barbarians of London, who will hate me because I am a Scotsman and am not a Whig, and despise me because I am a man of letters."[1] But an impartial observer must allow that this anti-Caledonian rage, however discreditable, was a most natural emotion. No one probably will maintain that a similar invasion of Scotland by the English would have been received by the natives with complacency or even equanimity. What is really remarkable is that the outburst has never been repeated, though the prosperity of the Scot abroad has increased by leaps and bounds, and though he has appropriated a very ample share of the common heritage.[2] No more striking

[1] Burton's *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, 2 vols. Edin., 1846, vol. ii. p. 290.

[2] The most familiar manifestation of the prejudice against the Scots is, of course, the half-serious, half-jocular growl of Dr. Johnson. To find the sentiment at its bitterest we must repair to Churchill's *Prophecy of Famine*, where we read :—

> "Jockey, whose manly high-boned cheeks to crown,
> With freckles spotted, flamed the golden down,
> With meikle art could on the bagpipes play,
> E'en from the rising to the setting day ;
> Sawney as long without remorse could bawl
> Home's madrigals and ditties from Fingal :
> Oft at his strains, all natural though rude,
> The Highland lass forgot her want of food ;
> And, whilst she scratched her lover into rest,
> Sunk pleased, though hungry, on her Sawney's breast."

testimony could be offered to the constitutional good-nature and generosity of the English people.

The most important result of the Union from our point of view is the complete disappearance of the Scottish dialect as a vehicle of serious prose, and as the medium of conversation among the educated classes of the community. The process of extinction has naturally been more gradual as regards the spoken than as regards the written word, but it has been none the less sure. What "the mail-coach and the Berwick smacks" [1] have left undone in completing the work of consolidation has been achieved by the railroad and the locomotive. Scotticisms and provincialisms may be met with in abundance in the speech of the trading, mercantile, and professional classes; but the old Scottish dialect as a thing of worth and honour has practically disappeared. Even among the artisans and the peasantry it is too rarely to be heard in its native purity and vigour; and in the vicinity of large towns it has been deplorably contaminated by the odious slang of the music-hall and the gutter.

As might have been expected, accent and intonation long survived vocabulary and idiom. Dr. Alexander Carlyle—than whom there is no higher authority on all that pertains to the social life of Scotland in the eighteenth century—mentions that his aunt from London taught him to read English "with just pronunciation and a very tolerable accent—an accomplishment which in those days was very rare." [2] Principal Robertson, we have it from the same witness, "spoke broad Scotch in point of pronunciation and accent or tone," though "his was the language of literature and taste, and of an enlightened and liberal mind." [3] It was the same with David Hume,[4] though his intimate friend, Adam Smith (perhaps as the result of six years at Oxford), spoke pure and correct English without

[1] Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 1 vol., Edin., 1893, p. 140.
[2] *Autobiography*, Edin., 1860, p. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 494.
[4] Burton's *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 440.

any appearance of constraint.[1] On the other hand, Dr. Hutton, the celebrated geologist, employed broad Scotch phrases as well as "a broad Scotch accent, which often heightened the humour of what he said."[2] As a set-off to him, Dr. Black, no less illustrious in chemistry than his brother-savant in geology, "spoke with the English pronunciation, with punctilious accuracy of expression, both in point of matter and manner." But the sustained effort after an English accent came later, and an association formed in the early sixties of the eighteenth century by a number of influential people for promoting the use of the English language by means of a teacher qualified to impart the true English pronunciation,[3] came to an untimely end, amid the ridicule of the general. Scott, from beginning to end, remained "broadly Scotch" in his speech, and had a burr besides.[4] His conversation as reported by Lockhart is full of racy and idiomatic Scotch expressions, but it is obvious that he used them always in inverted commas, so to speak.[5] His aunt had spoken "her native language pure and undiluted, but without the slightest tincture of that vulgarity which now seems almost unavoidable in the oral use of a dialect so long banished from Courts."[6] All the authorities are agreed as to

[1] Rae, *Life of Smith*, p. 28. Yet Smith now and then lapses into a Scotticism, *e.g.* "machine" = vehicle. (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. 1853, p. 260.)

[2] Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xix. p. 334. Dr. Carlyle thinks that the "gross mistake" of supposing the Scotch people to be devoid of humour could be demonstrated "by any person old enough to remember the times when the Scottish dialect was spoken in purity in the low country" (*Autob.*, p. 222).

[3] So late as 1824, the original prospectus of the Edinburgh Academy, in which Scott took so warm an interest, promises an English master "who shall have a pure English accent; the mere circumstance of his being born within the boundary of England not to be considered indispensable."

[4] Lockhart, *Life*, *ut sup.*, p. 25.

[5] The unconscious Scotticisms in his writing are not very numerous, or at least not very obtrusive. But he certainly speaks in a letter of receiving a thing *in* a present, and in *The Antiquary*, ch. i., of taking *out* a ticket for a coach.

[6] Lockhart, *Life*, p. 21.

the decadence of the Scotch spoken early in the last century. "Some of my friends assured me," says Dr. Morris, "that nothing could be more marked than the difference between the Scotch of those who learned it sixty years ago and that of the younger generation." [1] Only a few men of good family, who had spent their early years in the society of ladies and gentlemen whose only language was Scotch, retained the true elegance of the antique style; and their "pertinacious adherence to both the words and the music of the Doric dialect" seemed to savour of affectation.[2] To the Scotch of the younger generation there clung a rich flavour of the servants' hall or the stables.[3]

The most active agent in importing the English accent, or some colourable imitation of it, was, of course, Jeffrey, whose pronunciation is on all hands admitted to have been execrable. "A mixture of provincial English, with undignified Scotch, altogether snappish and offensive, and which would be quite sufficient to render the elocution of a more ordinary man utterly disgusting"; so Lockhart describes it, with his usual pungency.[4] But even the faithful Cockburn is obliged to give Jeffrey up on this head, and to admit with Lord Holland that while he had lost his broad Scotch at Oxford, he had only gained the narrow English. "It would have been better," judiciously owns the biographer, "if he had merely got some of the grosser matter rubbed off his vernacular tongue, and left himself, unencumbered both by it and by unattainable English, to his own respectable Scotch, refined by literature and good society, and used plainly and naturally, without

[1] *Peter's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 48. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ramsay of Ochtertyre tells the same story in a letter to Currie, Sept. 11, 1799. "I am old enough," he says, "to have conversed with Mr. Spittal, of Leuchat, a scholar and a man of fashion, who survived all the members of the Union Parliament, in which he had a seat. His pronunciation and phraseology differed as much from the common dialect as the language of St. James's from that of Thames Street" (Currie, *Burns*, ed. 1800, vol. i. p. 284).

[4] *Peter's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 60.

shame, and without affected exaggeration."[1] *Dis aliter visum;* and Jeffrey has proved to be the ancestor of a numerous progeny, who, in the pulpit, in the law courts, or in private life, talk a mincing and quasi-genteel lingo of their own (the sort of English known in some quarters as "Princes Street" or "Kelvinside"), the subtly hideous *nuances* of which not the most elaborate system of phonetic spelling yet devised would suffice to reproduce.

If the better part of a century was required to drive the national dialect from the conversation of the educated and well-to-do classes, it received much shorter shrift as a means of literary expression. The years immediately succeeding the Union were practically barren so far as literature was concerned, but the generation which was growing up to win distinction at a later date was engaged in "making itself" by the study of English authors, its one devouring ambition being to write English. In England the modern prose of Shaftesbury, Addison, and Swift had supplanted the more cumbrous, though imposing, machinery by which men had once propelled their ideas into the market-place; and the prose of the *Spectator* was separated by at least as wide a chasm from the prose of Stair as from the prose of Dryden. Conscious of the peculiarities and disadvantages of their native idiom, and animated by the hope of appealing to the public of the whole island, the Scottish philosophers, historians, and divines of the future spent an infinity of pains in imitating the best English writers of their age. They sought to rival the elegance and grace which were fashionable in England, and to adapt their genius to modern methods of exposition and argument. No man was more solicitous than Hume to be thoroughly English in style, or more alive to the disadvantages attendant in public life upon a mode of speech

[1] Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 2 vols., Edin., 1852, vol. i. p. 47. Francis Horner was at equal pains to improve his speech (*Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxii. p. 113).

which had necessarily come to be thought provincial. He compiled a list of Scotticisms to be carefully avoided.[1] He requested a creature like Malloch (or Mallet) to correct any such slips of language discoverable in his *History*. He advised that his nephews should be sent to Eton, chiefly to avoid the risk of contracting the Scots accent, and he animadverted upon the Scotticisms to be found in Robertson's *Charles V.* That historian himself was no less eager to catch the true English idiom, though, perhaps, neither he nor Hume was ever wholly successful in doing so.[2] Lord Mansfield, at all events, never thought, when he was reading Hume's and Robertson's works, that he was reading English ; which Dr. Carlyle accounted for, very sensibly, by pointing out to his lordship that "to every man bred in Scotland the English language was in some respects a foreign tongue, the precise value and force of whose phrases he did not understand, and therefore was continually endeavouring to word his expressions by additional epithets or circumlocutions which made his writings appear both stiff and redundant."[3] A hundred years later Mr. Robert Hunter was cautioning young Mr. Stevenson to be "punctilious in writing English ; never to forget that I was a Scotsman, that English was a foreign tongue, and that, if I attempted the colloquial, I should certainly be shamed" ; "the remark," adds the recipient of this counsel, "was apposite, I suppose, in the days of David Hume."[4] All through the eighteenth century, to write and speak pure English was the steady aim of the party in Scotland which was the champion of "enlightenment" and the foe of "barbarism" and "superstition." The vernacular might be left to the "bigots" and "high-flyers," who were

[1] See Hume, *Philosophical Works*, ed. Green and Grose, 1875, vol. iv. p. 461.

[2] In his correspondence Hume is less upon his guard, and undoubted Scotticisms are not uncommon, *e.g.* "no other body" = no one else, in a letter to Andrew Millar, Burton, *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 42. [3] *Autob.* p. 517.

[4] Stevenson, *Works*, Edin. edition, "Memories and Portraits," in *Miscellanies*, vol. i. p. 203.

supposed to be destitute of what in a later age came to be called culture. Not the least interesting of Beattie's prose writings is an anonymous little volume, published in 1787, on *Scoticisms, arranged in alphabetical order, designed to correct improprieties of speech and writing*.[1]

The net result of these praiseworthy endeavours was decidedly beneficial. But the disadvantages which flowed from them must not be overlooked. That they set a bad example to Scottish poets can scarcely be disputed. We may be pretty sure that they strengthened the powerful tendency which drove Burns so far to mistake his business as to compose English poems conceived in the "classical" taste in honour of certain of his flames. But even on Scottish prose writers the Anglicising movement left some bad effects.[2] They became more English than the English, and acquired a deplorable facility in imitating the fashionable tricks and mannerisms of the day. The really bad, because pretentious, prose of the eighteenth century—the prose of periphrasis and circumlocution, the prose which beats the bush with a prodigious deal of measured fuss but never starts the hare—took speedy root in Scotland, and the baleful tradition of "eloquence" acquired a firm hold in every sphere of life in which the employment of formal and premeditated speech plays an essential part.

Into the enormities perpetrated in the pulpit it is needless to enter. It is enough to refer to the egregious sermons of Dr. Hugh Blair (1718–1800),[3] which in popularity had almost no competitor, and which seem to recapitulate in themselves

[1] Mackenzie, in noticing the first volume of Burns (*Lounger*, No. 97, Dec. 9, 1786), remarks that "even in Scotland the provincial dialect which Ramsay and he have used is read with a difficulty which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader."

[2] Burns's dedication of the first Edinburgh edition of his poems (1787) to the noblemen and gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt is a characteristic specimen of a certain type of eighteenth century prose at its worst.

[3] *Sermons*, 5 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1777–1801.

all the most serious and characteristic faults to which the prose-writing of the century had become liable. In the profession of the law, the ideal of "eloquence," even in civil causes, was cherished no less ardently than in the Church. A cursory perusal of the old volumes of the Session papers will serve to show the care taken by practitioners to exhibit their copious arguments in accordance with all the most approved canons of composition as then understood.[1] The interminable memorials, informations, reclaiming petitions, and "states of the process" have about them a musty literary flavour in striking contrast to the matter-of-fact character of the more business-like documents of the present day. The abstract and even metaphysical nature of the questions upon which the judicial decision of cases might often depend gave scope for a display of rhetorical fireworks which would now be considered entirely inappropriate. It seems to have been the same with oral as with written pleading. Counsel permitted themselves to indulge in flights which nowadays scarce the most adventurous would attempt before a jury. If Alan Fairford's speech at the "hearing in presence" in the cause of Peebles *v.* Plainstanes[2] be a fair representation of the forensic oratory of Scott's youth and of the preceding age—and the reminiscence of a speech once delivered by Chrystal Croftangry's old friend, Mr. Sommerville, is in exactly the same

[1] Here is a single specimen : "The petitioners are the less discouraged by this interlocutor, though a heavy stroke to what they have held immemorially as their property, as the perplexity of the geography, the great variety of titles and proofs in the state, and the novelty of the points in dispute, depending upon a clear explanation of the state and situation of this river in different parts, and the practice of different kinds of fishings, are matters foreign to the ordinary course of business in the Court, and though perfectly understood by the parties interested, may be easily mistaken by the most discerning judges."—Arniston Coll., vol. lix., No. 10, Petn. for Sir Wm. Dunbar, Feb. 26th, 1760, drawn by Mr. Garden, afterwards Lord Gardenston. It will be remembered that Boswell more than once secured the aid of Johnson in drawing papers.

[2] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chap. i. of the narrative.

strain[1]—all that can be said is that the mode of pleading in vogue at the Scottish bar has undergone a total revolution. Traces of "eloquence" may perhaps be found in an occasional judicial utterance down to about five-and-twenty or thirty[2] years ago, and it lingered on to an even later date in the addresses with which the pronouncing of the sentence of death was invariably preluded. But it is now practically unknown; and its most objectionable variety, the "flowery," is wholly extinct.

It was in the Scottish Universities, however, that the striving after "eloquence" was most productive of mischief. The word is always cropping up in the description of eminent professors. Francis Hutcheson, when enforcing the moral virtues and duties, is said to have "displayed a fervent and persuasive *eloquence* which was irresistible."[3] Dugald Stewart tells us of the *eloquence* with which Maclaurin, the famous mathematician, "knew how to adorn the most abstracted subjects."[4] The "striking and impressive *eloquence*" of Dugald Stewart himself "riveted the attention even of the most volatile student," according to Scott.[5] Even Alexander Monro, the great professor of Anatomy, had been eloquent, as Dr. Somerville assures us, and in a later age Sir Daniel Sandford found upon entering the reformed House of Commons as member for Paisley that the eloquence which had charmed his Greek class at Glasgow College was a complete failure at Westminster. There have been professors, indeed, whose sole qualification for their chairs has been "eloquence." Of such John Wilson was the foremost. But the most distressing manifestation of "eloquence," in the worst sense of the word, is Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith's peculiarities of speech and manner probably prevented

[1] Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, chap. i.

[2] See, for example, portions of Lord Ardmillan's opinion in *Kirkwood v. Manson*, 1871, Session Cases, 3rd Ser., vol. ix. p. 696.

[3] Carlyle, *Autob.*, p. 70. [4] *Memoir of Robertson*, p. 4.

[5] Autobiographical fragment, *apud* Lockhart, *Life*, p. 12.

him from being a finished orator. "His voice was harsh, and enunciation thick, approaching to stammering. His conversation was not colloquial, but like lecturing."[1] Yet, when he warmed to his subject, he seems to have overcome his natural impediments, if Professor Millar's account is to be trusted;[2] and, in any case, there remains the *Theory* to remind us into what woful depths of twaddle an able man might be led by the desire to shine as a master of polished English. It would be difficult to believe that the *Theory*, with its vapid sentimentalities, emanated from the same brain as *The Wealth of Nations*, were it not notorious that in the garden of letters a good tree is often capable of bearing other than good fruit. Smith's, though the most conspicuous, was not the only case in which closeness of reasoning, accuracy of thought, and vigour of intellect were sacrificed to a false elegance of style and an artificial propriety of diction.

From the bastard eloquence of which we have spoken David Hume, for all his striving to write English, was absolutely free. "Of all the vices of language," he writes to his cousin, John Home, "the least excusable is the want of perspicuity; for, as words were instituted by men merely for conveying their ideas to each other, the employing of words without meaning is a palpable abuse, which departs from the very original purpose and intention of language."[3] These maxims have not, alas! been invariably attended to by them that write; but no one could have proved himself more observant of them in practice than their author.

David Hume[4] was born in 1711 to the laird of Ninewells,

[1] Carlyle, *Autob.*, p. 279.

[2] Rae, *Life of Smith*, p. 56.

[3] Burton, *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 475.

[4] J. H. Burton, *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, 2 vols., Edin., 1846; Huxley, *Hume* (E.M.L.), 1879; *Letters of David Hume to William Strahan*, ed. G. B. Hill, Oxford, 1888. *Philosophical Works*, ed. Green and Grose, 4 vols., 1874–75; *Treatise*, ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, 1896; *Inquiry*, ed. the same, 1894. For an account of Hume and his contemporaries, consult also Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, 1901.

in Berwickshire. At an early age he discovered the twofold ambition of his life—the attainment of pecuniary independence (for his was the meagre portion of a younger son), and the attainment of celebrity as an author. In both these aims he was completely successful. The former he achieved by an expedient once familiar to his countrymen. Instead of endeavouring to swell his income in order to overtake his expenditure, he systematically accommodated his expenditure to his income. Consequently he had saved £1,000, which brought him in £50 a year, by the time he was forty, and during the last seven or eight years of his life, his annual income equalled the amount of that capital sum. Rejecting both commerce and the bar as a career, he applied himself to a course of severe study, the first-fruits of which were exhibited in 1739 in the shape of the two first volumes of a *Treatise of Human Nature*. Next year saw the appearance of the third and concluding volume. But to his intense disappointment, this carefully prepared and considered work "fell deadborn from the press, without even exciting a murmur among the zealots."[1] Two volumes of *Essays Moral and Political* followed in 1741 and 1742 respectively, and in the interval between these and his next work, the *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* (1748), which comprehended the famous *Essay on Miracles*, he failed to secure the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; fulfilled a lucrative but unpleasant engagement as private tutor to the young Marquis of Annandale; and followed General St. Clair on a mission to Turin in the capacity of Secretary. What he considered "incomparably the best" of all his writings, the *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, issued from the press in 1751–52; and about the same time he composed his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, a work published for the first time after his death, in accordance with his testamentary directions. The *Political Discourses* came in 1752, the year

[1] *My Own Life*, Green and Grose, vol. iii. p. 2.

in which he was chosen librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, and the *Natural History of Religion* in 1757, the year in which he resigned that, to him, useful, though not very remunerative, office. Meanwhile, the first and second volumes of his *History of England*, dealing with the troubled times of the seventeenth century, had been brought out (1754 and 1756); and the work was completed in 1762.

In 1763 came the great event of his life. He was chosen by the Marquis of Hertford to accompany him to Paris as acting-secretary (afterwards as secretary) to the British Embassy to the Court of Louis XV. In the French capital he met with a welcome commensurate not merely with the importance of his position in the Ambassador's train, but also (which was infinitely more grateful and soothing to his eager vanity) with his exceptional eminence in the field of philosophy and letters. Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, all that was most distinguished in *philosophe*-dom, received him with rapture; and the doors of the most brilliant salons flew open to admit him to the intellectual feasts that awaited him within. It was during this period of his life that he became involved with J.-J. Rousseau, at whose hands he met with the customary reward of all such as endeavoured to do that crazy sentimentalist a good turn. He held the post of Under-Secretary of State in London from 1767 to 1769, but London was a bitter disappointment after Paris. The indifference of London society to his merits was Hume's principal standing grievance. He is perpetually harking back to the contrast between the general regard paid to genius and learning in France, and the neglect they meet with in London, where letters are held in no honour. He marvels that great men in England "should slight and neglect men of letters when they pay court to them, and rail at them when they do not";[1] and he points out that, whereas in the French capital "a man that distinguishes himself in letters meets immediately with

[1] Burton, *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 134.

regard and attention," in the English, "a man who plays no part in public affairs becomes altogether insignificant, and if he is not rich he becomes even contemptible. I know not," he exclaims, "with whom [a successful man of letters] is to live, or how he is to pass his time in a suitable society." [1] Life in Paris had obviously sharpened his appetite for commerce with the great, nor could he make shift to put up with the society of his fellow-countryman and equal by birth, Tobias Smollett, whose "polished and agreeable manners," as well as "the great urbanity of his conversation" are vouched for, somewhat unexpectedly, by Dr. Carlyle.[2] Hume returned to Edinburgh in 1769, where he spent the remainder of his days in the society of congenial and thoroughly appreciative friends. He died in 1776, leaving behind him an autobiographical sketch, which is one of the most characteristic of his writings.

Hume was, *omnium consensu*, blessed with a singularly amiable and equable temperament. One of the few occasions on which his equanimity was perceptibly ruffled in company was when John Home informed him that the studies of a young man who had robbed his master of a considerable sum had been chiefly confined to two books: Boston's *Fourfold State* and Hume's *Essays*. The same simplicity and native benevolence of character distinguished him whether, in his poorer days, he was entertaining his companions with a roasted hen, a dish of minced collops, and a bowl of punch, or was regaling them in his prosperity with "elegant dinners and suppers, and the best claret." "For innocent mirth and agreeable raillery," continues Carlyle, "I never knew his match." [3] Even in his will there is a well-known snatch of pleasant *badinage* at the expense of John Home.[4] His

[1] Burton, *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 268. [2] *Autob.*, p. 340. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

[4] "I leave to my friend, Mr. John Home of Kilduff, ten dozen of my old claret at his choice; and one single bottle of that other liquor called port. I also leave to him six dozen of port, provided that he attests under his

conversation, Carlyle further tells us, "was truly irresistible, for while it was enlightened it was naïve almost to puerility." Perhaps it was this ingenuousness that his mother had in view when she gave utterance to the cryptic saying which has puzzled all the commentators: "Our Davie's a fine good-natured creature, but uncommon weak-minded." Adam Smith's verdict upon the character of his friend is even more emphatic than Carlyle's. "Upon the whole," he solemnly declares in his famous letter to Strahan, "I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit."[1] We may acquiesce in the judgment, subject to certain qualifications. There is nothing very inspiring or romantic about Hume's type of moral excellence, though Mr. Burton has done his best to vindicate his poetical gifts from the aspersions of Scott.[2] Again, his was not the temper of the man who voluntarily invites martyrdom for his opinions: a fact which some may impute to him for a positive merit. He had no wish to outrun public opinion by too great a distance; many of the younger clergy were his personal friends, to the immense scandal of the zealots, "who little knew, as Carlyle boldly avers, "how impossible it was for

hand, signed John *Hume*, that he has himself alone finished that bottle at two sittings. By this concession, he will at once terminate the only two differences that ever arose between us concerning temporal matters."

[1] Hume, *Phil. Works*, ed. Green and Grose, vol. iii. p. 14.

[2] "We visited Corby Castle on our return to Scotland, which remains, in point of situation, as beautiful as when its walks were celebrated by David Hume, in the only rhymes he was ever known to be guilty of. Here they are from a pane of glass in an inn at Carlisle—

> "'Here chicks in eggs for breakfast sprawl,
> Here godless boys God's glories squall,
> Here Scotchmen's heads do guard the wall,
> But Corby's walks atone for all.'"

Scott to Morritt, October 2, 1815, *apud* Lockhart, *Life*, p. 323.

him, had he been willing, to shake their opinions"; [1] and he was little disposed to court the obloquy and ostracism which must have then resulted from the ostentatious avowal of sceptical views upon religion. One would have imagined that many of his published opinions were open and explicit enough, and that of others the true drift could by no means be mistaken. Yet he was at great pains to ignore—and he succeeded for a time, at any rate, in making "all the good company in town" ignore—the logical consequences which inevitably flowed from them. The really weak spot in his character was his excessive literary vanity. We have seen how a wound in this his tenderest part made him lift up his voice against London and the society of London; and indeed the ruling passion distorted his outlook upon current politics to that extent that he actually professed to sigh for the downfall and bankruptcy of England with greater fervour than many a revolting American colonist. It was not vouchsafed to him to see that, dull and besotted as the world of London might in his estimation be, it was yet more clean and wholesome—less saturated with the poison of deadly corruption—than that brilliant and attractive world of Paris, where vice was made doubly hateful by masquerading in the guise of intelligence and enlightenment. After all, these foibles subtract little from the sum-total of Hume's excellences; and he deserves something better at our hands than a cautious and merely negative verdict of approbation.

Hume's reputation as an historian has, partly from his pre-eminence in other departments and partly from causes for which he cannot be held responsible, suffered unmerited eclipse. He belongs neither to the "scientific" nor to the "picturesque"

[1] *Autob.*, p. 275. Carlyle avows himself of those who "never believed that David Hume's sceptical principles had laid fast hold on his mind, but thought that his books proceeded rather from affectation of superiority and pride of understanding and love of vain-glory" (*ibid.* p. 273). He then proceeds to fortify this not very flattering hypothesis with a not very convincing anecdote repeated on the authority of Mr. Patrick Boyle.

category of historians. He had little of the true antiquarian instinct, and the portion of his great work which is latest in date and which deals with the earliest period of English history is not only unsatisfactory according to modern lights, but betrays no sign of the diligent research which has rendered a book like Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* a possession of permanent value. On the other hand he has none of the pomp and circumstance of Gibbon, nor any of the faculty of imposing narrative which undoubtedly belonged to Macaulay. On a first reading, Hume is comparatively tame. He does not indulge in the purple patches which a reader is apt to seek, and for the sake of which he is content to traverse intervening tracts of dulness. But Hume wears well as an historian, in the sense that the more often he is read the better he will be liked. His native shrewdness and sense of humour disclose themselves more fully, the more attentively his chapters are studied. And this at least can be said of Hume: that he is not a deliberate falsifier of facts, and makes no parade of being free from bias. The sentiments to which he gave expression in his *History* were a cause of high offence to the Whigs of his time, and have, perhaps, not contributed to keep that work in high esteem. The liberty of thought and speech, for which every Whig was prepared to go to the scaffold, or at the very least to send his King thither, has generally been denied to a Tory, except upon pain of provoking the most withering scorn and indignation. Yet no man with any taste of good literature can help admiring the adroit manner in which Hume insinuates his views, and the quiet way in which he delivers his deadliest thrusts. Now and then, to be sure, he lets himself go. The inscrutable smile at the follies and failings of humanity leaves his lips, and his features for a moment become suffused with the glow of passion. It is thus, for example, when he criticises those, "partial to the patriots" of the age of the Great Rebellion, who have mentioned the names of Pym, Hampden, and Vane, as a just parallel to those of Cato, Brutus, and Cassius:—

"Profound capacity, indeed, undaunted courage, extensive enterprise; in these particulars, perhaps, the Roman did not much surpass the English worthies; but what a difference, when the discourse, conduct, conversation, and private as well as public behaviour of both are inspected! Compare only one circumstance and consider its consequences. The leisure of those noble ancients was totally employed in the study of Grecian eloquence and philosophy; in the cultivation of polite letters and civilized society: the whole discourse and language of the moderns were polluted with mysterious jargon, and full of the lowest and most vulgar hypocrisy." [1]

But such violent and inartistic outbursts are rare. As a rule the historian has his temper well in hand. To throw contempt and ridicule upon the Presbyterian and sectarian fanatics, who had their day between 1640 and 1660, is, perhaps, no very difficult task. Hume has done it once for all with incomparable skill; and the lesson he taught will never be superfluous, so long as the extravagant claims of those hypocrites and enthusiasts to superior virtue and superior political wisdom are solemnly reasserted by their admirers. The reputation of Gibbon for an unrivalled power of sneering at the palpable inconsistencies of religious zealots should not blind us to the more subtle and less ostentatious art of Hume in the same department. Yet his intense dislike of pretensions to moral excellence which rested upon no solid foundation in conduct never blinded him to real strength of character and true political or military genius. Repellent as one side of Cromwell's temperament was to his own, he pays his tribute to the abilities of the Protector with a tolerably good grace; acknowledges the pitch of efficiency to which he brought the armaments of England; and admits the success of his administration of Scottish affairs:—

"He courted the Presbyterian clergy, though he nourished that intestine enmity which prevailed between resolutioners and protesters; and he found that very little policy was requisite to foment

[1] *History*, ed. 1825, vol. vi. p. 316.

quarrels among theologians. He permitted no church assemblies; being sensible that from thence had proceeded many of the past disorders. And in the main the Scots were obliged to acknowledge, that never before, while they enjoyed their irregular factious liberty, had they attained so much happiness as at present, when reduced to subjection under a foreign nation."[1]

Not the least interesting feature in Hume's *History* is the occasional surveys of manners, arts, science, and literature at different periods. In these there is much that is valuable in itself, and more that throws light on Hume's own attitude of mind. As regards literature, his fame as a critic stands no higher than it deserves to do. He and Adam Smith are involved in one sweeping and celebrated censure by Wordsworth. Even by the younger men, his own friends, he was thought to be "behind the age"; and was regarded with the same feelings of compassion as a thoroughgoing admirer of Tennyson is now viewed by the disciples of the latest apostle of decadence. He contrives, with an effort, to speak pretty handsomely of Milton, and he does not obtrude his doubts about Shakespeare to an alarming extent. But the French theatre was much more to his mind than the British, and he was probably quite sincere in the extravagant praise which he squandered upon *Douglas*.[2] He had little true artistic sensibility, and Carlyle seems to sum up his case and Adam Smith's very justly when he opines that "their taste was a rational act rather than the instantaneous effect of fine feeling."[3]

The views which found their way into his *History*, Hume was far from seeking to exclude from his political speculations.[4]

[1] *History*, *ut sup.*, vol. vii. p. 259.

[2] Dedication to *Four Dissertations* (1757) to "the Reverend Mr. Hume."

[3] *Autob.*, p. 283.

[4] Among the Scottish political inquirers of the age, we must not forget to note Robert Wallace (1697–1771), whose *Dissertation on the numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times* (1753) is designed to prove "the superior populousness of antiquity," and who has a great hatred of luxury and all "operose manufactures."

A free-thinker and a rationalist in religion and metaphysics, he was a strong Tory in politics, in the sense that he always leaned to the side of authority. He was what we should call a strong supporter of "law and order." License and faction disgusted, perhaps alarmed, him. The strange spectacle presented by the vehement contentions of political parties in England struck him with anything rather than admiration. In Scotland active political life may be said to have been at a standstill; and the only variation from the quiet routine of being governed by some great nobleman like the Duke of Argyll, was afforded by a meal-mob, or by some such recrudescence of the national love of organised turbulence as the Porteous riot. Hume saw no reason why, if men would only be moderate and consistent, the government of the country should not be carried on with much less brawling and at least equal efficiency. In the Essay entitled *Politics a Science*, he sets forth his views on this topic with even more than his usual delicacy of wit. But the misfortune is that, neither in Hume's, nor in any other age, have men been content to be moderate and consistent; and in this respect, if not in others, Hume like many writers of the school which insists that man invariably and necessarily acts in obedience to the strongest desire of the moment is open to the charge of under-rating the strength of human passion. Nevertheless, his political essays cannot be neglected by the historian of political thought, and those of them which are concerned with economic problems are particularly valuable. We shall not assert that he anticipated Adam Smith in the discovery, as well as in the promulgation, of some of his most characteristic doctrines. The paternity of new ideas is as much a matter of uncertainty as the paternity of anything else. But it is a simple matter of facts and dates that more than a quarter of a century before the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* Hume had advanced precisely the same considerations against the Mercantile System as were afterwards employed by the father of Political Economy, and had advocated Free Trade for the very

reasons for which Free Trade has always been theoretically justified.

It was in the religious world that Hume's philosophical speculations made the loudest noise in his lifetime; and, whether he deserved the appellation of "atheist" or not, we cannot affect to be surprised that some of his work should have goaded the ministers of religion into vigorous antagonism. The Deistical controversy had closed with the complete failure of the attempt to substitute natural for revealed religion. Hume instituted a new method of attack by adopting an attitude equally hostile to both. Thus Butler's argument, to which the Deists were unable to make any reply worth stating, became to a great extent inapplicable where the ultimate premises of the opponent were consistently sceptical. Other lines of defence had to be constructed, and posterity is on the whole agreed that neither the *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*, of James Beattie (1735–1803), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen, nor the *Dissertation on Miracles*, of George Campbell (1719–96), Principal of the Marischal College in the same University, is conclusive as a refutation of Hume's contentions, however they may rise above the level of the average controversial work of the period. It would be strange, indeed, if the clergy had remained silent and supine under Hume's assault upon the faith; for to those who hold that Christianity itself disappears with the elimination of its miraculous and supernatural elements, it is perfectly plain that Hume left not one jot or tittle of their creed intact. The *Essay on Miracles* cannot be accused of temporising with the fundamentals; and its tone is assuredly not conciliatory, for those, at all events, who can penetrate the not very opaque veil of its irony. Few more pungent or contemptuous things have been penned in religious controversy than its closing paragraphs, which, familiar though they are, it is impossible to help once more transcribing :—

"I am the better pleased with the method of reasoning here delivered, as I think it may serve to confound those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the Christian Religion who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason.

"Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure. To make this more evident, let us examine those miracles related in Scripture; and not to lose ourselves in too wide a field, let us confine ourselves to such as we find in the *Pentateuch*, which we shall examine, according to the principles of those pretended Christians, not as the word or testimony of God Himself, but as the production of a mere human writer and historian. Here then we are first to consider a book, presented to us by a barbarous and ignorant people, written in an age when they were still more barbarous, and in all probability long after the facts which it relates, corroborated by no concurring testimony, and resembling those fabulous accounts which every nation gives of its origin. Upon reading this book, we find it full of prodigies and miracles. It gives an account of the state of the world and of human nature entirely different from the present; of our fall from that state: of the age of man extended to near a thousand years: of the destruction of the world by a deluge: of the arbitrary choice of one people as the favourites of heaven, and that people the countrymen of the author: of their deliverance from bondage by prodigies the most astonishing imaginable: I desire any one to lay his hand upon his heart, and after a serious consideration declare, whether he thinks that the falsehood of such a book, supported by such a testimony, would be more extraordinary and miraculous than all the miracles it relates; which is, however, necessary to make it be received, according to the measures of probability above established.

"What we have said of miracles may be applied, without any variation, to prophecies; and indeed, all prophecies are real miracles, and as such only can be admitted as proofs of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretell future events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as an argument for a divine mission or authority from heaven. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude that the *Christian Religion* not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity; and whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding,

and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience." [1]

It is almost incredible, but so, nevertheless, it is, that on the strength of this passage Hume has actually been claimed as "a witness for Christianity, whose testimony is in some respects the more valuable, since beset with so many and such grave doubts." [2]

Up to this point Hume's most enthusiastic admirers in the nineteenth century have willingly followed him. But many of them have failed to observe, or have taken care not to observe, that his doctrines go a great deal further. He has cut away the supports, not only of revealed religion, but, of all knowledge. So far from laying down the fundamental principles upon which scientific inquiry must proceed, he has laid down principles which render scientific inquiry nugatory, and the attainment of any species of certainty impossible.

Assuming experience to be the ultimate test, and waiving the question of its value, Hume argues that, just as all that we know of the outside world may be resolved into certain sensations, so all that we know of our own mind, of our *self*, is certain perceptions. "When I enter most intimately," he says, "into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular conception or other. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception." Hence he concludes that the rest of mankind are "but a bundle of different conceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." In other words, the identity which we ascribe to mind is as purely fictitious as Berkeley had proved that identity to be which we attribute to external objects. All attempts to form a rational theory of the identity of self are futile ; and the whole world is consequently left a chaos of

[1] *Philosophical Works*, ed. *cit.*, vol. iv. p. 107.
[2] See Calderwood, *David Hume* (F.S.S.), Edin., 1898.

unrelated and unrelatable particulars. David, in short (if the quotation may be permitted), was "the daring boy, who fairly floored both mind and matter."

This thorough-going scepticism is not so plainly indicated in his other works as in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, his earliest work, of which the posthumous edition of the *Essays*, published in 1777, contains a singular and not very candid repudiation, but which, certain defects in style notwithstanding, will always be regarded as his philosophical masterpiece. He there does for Berkeley what Berkeley had done for Locke, by carrying his principles to their logical conclusion. "Mind" once reduced to a series of sensations, Hume was wise enough not to stultify his cardinal proposition at the very outset by attributing to that series a consciousness of itself. It is no business of ours to discuss whether Hume was right or wrong. But it *is* ours to note that, whether in metaphysics or in ethics, he is incomparably the greatest of all modern empirical or sceptical philosophers. Consistent in detail he may not always have been ; for to few is the good fortune granted so to be. But in all the essentials of his teaching he is stedfast and immovable, and he is rarely, if ever, caught in the act of making concessions which at once put him out of court. Above all, he never thumps the pulpit in a frenzy of enthusiasm for a negation. There have been sceptical philosophers who were obviously designed by nature for the street-preacher's tub ; who have gushed and snuffled and whined about the high ideals of hedonism ; and who, having knocked the Humpty-Dumpty of virtue off his comfortable wall, have endeavoured to set him up again with many elaborate compliments upon the improvement which the catastrophe has wrought in his attractiveness and charm. Not so Hume. He has the enviable gift of writing as though, while in the world, he were not of it, but had secured absolute immunity from its manifold temptations and snares. This welcome air of detachment, coupled with his unfailing humour, his knowledge of mankind,

and his all but invariable lucidity, will preserve his works as literature long after the writings of the "high-flying" school of empirical philosophers has sunk into well-merited oblivion.

Hume lived on terms of good fellowship with the many eminent men who were to be found, during the period of his maturity and fame, in the society of Edinburgh. But probably his most intimate friend was Adam Smith,[1] who was born in Kirkcaldy in 1722. Smith, in due course, proceeded to Glasgow College, and thence, with the aid of the Snell Exhibition, to Balliol. He remained at Oxford from 1740 until 1746, and he is creditably distinguished from some whose residence there was nearly contemporary with his by having been less vehement and sweeping than they in the reproaches which he cast at his *Alma Mater*. In his early youth he had a strong taste for mathematics, but at a later stage he applied himself to all branches of learning, and during the greater part of his life he must, consciously and unconsciously, have been accumulating material for his *magnum opus*.

After leaving Oxford, he gave a course of lectures in Edinburgh upon English Literature; a private speculation of his own, which met with a large measure of success; for English was all the rage, and long before the *soi-disant* University Extension movement was initiated, the half-educated classes of the community appear to have had an appetite for dabbling in what they were ill-fitted to comprehend. His capabilities as a critic have been summarily disposed of by Wordsworth; and there is little inducement to plead for a more lenient sentence in the case of one who, in discussing the Philoctetes, the Hippolytus, and the Hercules of Greek tragedy, has opined that these attempts to excite compassion by the representation of bodily pain, "may be regarded as among the greatest breaches of decorum of which

[1] Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895. The most convenient edition of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, is that published by Bohn, 1853; of *The Wealth of Nations*, the best is that ed. by Rogers, 2 vols., Oxford, 1869.

the Greek theatre has set the example."[1] The educated, however, as well as the half-educated classes, supported Smith as a lecturer, and there can be little doubt that the reputation he won in this volunteer enterprise contributed to secure his appointment to the chair of Logic in the University of Glasgow in 1750. Two years later, he was transferred to the chair of Moral Philosophy, which had formerly been held by Francis Hutcheson.

Smith discharged the duties of his professorship with what in another, though cognate, sphere, is styled "great acceptance." In 1759, he gave some of the results of his labours to the general public, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, to which allusion has been already made. But the emoluments of a professorial chair in a Scottish University in that age were meagre, even judged by the prevailing standard of comfort. Better things were in store; and Smith, in 1764, became private tutor to the young Duke of Buccleuch—one of the most excellent and respected of the many excellent and respected men who have borne that title. In this office he won the lasting esteem and respect of his pupil, for, though no great hand at making a festive gathering pass off with *éclat*, he had so much solid worth as rarely failed to recommend him to those with whom he had been brought into contact. *Functus officio*, he received from the Duke an annuity of £300 a year, and in 1778 his means were further increased by his preferment to the post of Commissioner of Customs in Scotland. This meant the transference of his establishment to Edinburgh from his native town, whither he had retired twelve years before, and whence he had issued to the world his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). He died in 1790, having survived his mother, his filial devotion to whom was in the highest degree examplary, by no more than six years.

Even during the period of his residence in Glasgow, Smith was constantly in Edinburgh, where the majority of his friends

[1] *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. *cit.*, p. 38.

had their abode. He was a contributor to the first *Edinburgh Review*, of which two numbers appeared in 1755, and he belonged to the "Select Society," founded in 1754 by Allan Ramsay the younger. That grown-up men should form an association for the purpose of discussing any question in a more or less formal manner is certainly a startling notion to the present generation. Debating Societies, we are apt to think, should be left to the youthful, to those who have plenty of time to canvass topics on which all sensible men have made up their minds, and would rather not divulge their sentiments. The men of the eighteenth century apparently possessed the talisman of perpetual youth. At all events, the Select ones held their meeting every Friday in the Advocates' Library, and seem to have been as "keen" as if they had been lads in the "Speculative," which was yet a thing of the future. Smith, we gather, did not shine much in private life. He had none of the charm of Hume or Robertson. His absent-mindedness was notorious, and we have an anecdote on the subject from Scott,[1] more accurate probably, if not more authentic, than his celebrated story of the meeting of Smith and Johnson. That some "holtercation" took place between the great men at their meeting is certain. It is equally certain that Glasgow was not the scene of it. But what passed, and what language was employed, no one knows. Johnson, for one, bore no malice, for he declared to Boswell in 1763 that had he known of Smith's strong preference for rhyme before blank verse, he would have "hugged him."

Both as a moral philosopher and as an economist there is no doubt that Smith imbibed some of his views from Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746),[2] who, though born in the North of Ireland, was of Scots extraction, and who played a prominent part in the awakening of the Scottish Universities. Hutcheson, like many Protestant dissenters in Ireland at that time, had

[1] *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xix. p. 339.

[2] W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, Cambridge, 1900.

himself been a student at Glasgow, and, after conducting an Academy for his co-religionists in Dublin, where he became a *persona grata* at the Court of the Lord Lieutenant, he returned to Glasgow as Professor of Moral Philosophy. Smith was one of his pupils, who all appear to have been deeply impressed by the excellence and earnestness of their teacher.

Hutcheson's principal works consist of an *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), an *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions* (1728), a *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (1747), and a *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755). His philosophical principles are to a large extent founded upon Shaftesbury's, with benevolence put into the prominent place, and the *dilettante* element omitted. But he rarely, if ever, comes to close quarters with moral or psychological facts, and he is as incurable an optimist as Dr. Pangloss. What importance he was once thought to possess in the history of philosophy, he can no longer lay claim to. Even his admirers are compelled to praise him, somewhat vaguely, as one of the heralds of the *aufklärung* in Scotland, rather than as the founder of some striking system of ethics. They fall back upon his personal character, and tell us that he was "a living example of lofty aims and noble aspirations." But even the fact that he was "one of those rare spirits who exercise a gracious influence over those they meet"[1] cannot justify his occupation of much space in a history of literature. His style, to which reference has been already made, is sufficiently echoed in the excerpt from Smith which will be found later on; for to Smith he communicated his forcible-feeble turns of oratory, his optimism, and his Whiggery.[2] He

[1] Scott, *ut supra*, p. 147. It is right, however, to say that Mr. Scott makes a thorough examination of Hutcheson's teaching, as developed in his works.

[2] As a specimen of the optimism, take Smith's attack on "those whining and melancholy moralists who are perpetually reproaching us with our happiness while so many of our brethren are in such misery." The "artificial commiseration" thus advocated is, he points out, at once absurd

will be best remembered as the inventor of that most ambiguous and potent of phrases, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

We may accordingly return to Smith, and attempt to justify the opinion already indicated of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The cardinal proposition of that work, which was received with great favour, may be stated thus, in the author's own language. "We either approve or disapprove of the conduct of another man, according as we feel that, when we bring his case home to ourselves, we either can or cannot entirely sympathise with the sentiments and motives which directed it. And, in the same manner, we either approve or disapprove of our own conduct, according as we feel that, when we place ourselves in the situation of another man, and view it, as it were, with his eyes and from his station, we either can or cannot entirely enter into and sympathise with the sentiments and motives which influenced him." [1] The reader must judge for himself of the validity of this fantastic standard by which praise and blame are to be distributed, involving, as it does, a constant and endless transmigration from one man's skin into another's. Also the reader must judge for himself as to the adequacy of Smith's psychology: as to whether, for example, the account of sympathy at the beginning of the book is at all satisfactory, and whether it be true that violent hunger evokes no sympathy (and therefore is considered indecent), because, by reading the description of it, or seeing it, we do not grow hungry ourselves. The point for us is, not whether Smith's contentions

[a very favourite word of reproach with him], unattainable, and useless. "Take the whole earth at an average, for one man who suffers pain or misery, you will find twenty in prosperity and joy, or at least in tolerable circumstances. No reason surely can be assigned, why we should rather weep with the one than rejoice with the twenty" (*Theory*, ed. *cit.*, p. 197). As a specimen of the Whiggery, take this dictum: "That kings are the servants of the people, to be obeyed, resisted, deposed, or punished, as the public conveniency may require, is the doctrine of reason and philosophy" *Ibid.* p. 74). He admits, however, that it is not "the doctrine of nature."

[1] *Theory*, ed. *cit.*, p. 161.

are sound, but how he has expressed them : and, as his work stands, I question whether a larger collection of pompous and empty platitudes was ever made by a great writer. When we find conscience described as "the great inmate of the breast," we may well be on our guard ; and, when we find an argument enforced by a series of rhetorical questions in the manner of Mr. Chadband, we know that we are dealing not with a man who has penetrated the depths of human nature (and, indeed, Smith is as superficial as can be), but with one who is determined to demonstrate his own accomplishment by exhibiting all the tricks of English rhetoric. Occasionally there is an outburst of something like genuine feeling, as when he deplores the cruel destiny of the North American Indian and the Negro, to whose peculiar merits he has paid a handsome tribute. "Fortune," he says, "never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the gaols of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtues neither of the countries which they come from, nor of those which they go to, and whose levity, brutality, and baseness, so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished." [1] But much more frequently he is in the following strain :—

"How aimiable does he appear to be whose sympathetic heart seems to re-echo all the sentiments of those with whom he converses, who grieves for their calamities, who resents their injuries, and who rejoices at their good fortune? When we bring home to ourselves the situation of his companions, we enter into their gratitude, and feel what consolation they must derive from the tender sympathy of so affectionate a friend. And, for a contrary reason, how disagreeable does he appear to be whose hard and obdurate heart feels for himself only, but is altogether insensible to the happiness or misery of others? We enter, in this case too, into the pain which his presence must give to every mortal with whom he converses, to those especially with whom we are most apt to sympathise, the unfortunate and the injured.

[1] *Theory*, ed *cit.*, p. 300.

"On the other hand, what noble propriety and grace do we feel in the conduct of those who, in their own case, exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into? We are disgusted with that clamourous grief, which, without any delicacy, calls upon our compassion with sighs and tears, and importunate lamentations. But we reverence that reserved, that silent and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes, in the quivering of the lips and cheeks, and in the distant, but affecting, coldness of the whole behaviour. It imposes the like silence upon us. We regard it with respectful attention, and watch with concern over our whole behaviour, lest by any impropriety we should disturb that concerted tranquillity which it requires so great an effort to support.

"The insolence and brutality of anger, in the same manner, when we indulge its fury without check or restraint, is, of all objects, the most detestable. But we admire that noble and generous resentment which governs its pursuit of the greatest injuries, not by the rage which they are apt to excite in the breast of the sufferer, but by the indignation which they naturally call forth in that of the impartial spectator; which allows no word, no gesture, to escape it beyond what this more equitable sentiment would dictate; which never, even in thought, attempts any greater vengeance, nor desires to inflict any greater punishment, than what every indifferent person would rejoice to see executed.

"And hence it is, that to feel much for others, and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their whole grace and propriety. As to love our neighbour as ourselves is the great law of Christianity, so it is the great precept of nature to love ourselves only as we love our neighbours, or, what comes to the same thing, as our neighbour is capable of loving us.

"As taste and good judgment, when they are considered as qualities which deserve praise and admiration, are supposed to imply a delicacy of sentiment and an acuteness of understanding not commonly to be met with; so the virtues of sensibility and self-command are not apprehended to consist in the ordinary but in the uncommon degrees of those qualities. The amiable virtue of humanity requires, surely, a sensibility much beyond what is possessed by the rude vulgar of mankind. The great and exalted virtue of magnanimity undoubtedly demands much more than that degree of self-command

which the weakest of mortals is capable of exerting. As in the common degree of the intellectual qualities there are no abilities; so in the common degree of the moral there is no virtue. Virtue is excellence, something uncommonly great and beautiful, which rises far above what is vulgar and ordinary. The aimiable virtues consist in that degree of sensibility which surprises by its exquisite and unexpected delicacy and tenderness. The awful and respectable, in that degree of self-command which astonishes by its amazing superiority over the most ungovernable passions of human nature." [1]

Better, surely, than this the blunt straightforward hedonism of Hume; better, even, the brutal cynicism of the philosopher whom Smith denominates "Dr. Mandeville."

But the author of the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* is a very different person from the author of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The vices of the earlier work are superseded by the corresponding virtues. While the *Theory* is flaccid and invertebrate, the *Inquiry* is firm and vigorous; while the *Theory* seems hopelessly unreal, the *Inquiry* brings us into the closest contact with hard facts; while the *Theory* is little better than a collection of what were then esteemed fine phrases, the *Inquiry* is compact of shrewd judgment and sagacious observation; and, finally, while the *Theory* has left practically no mark on the development of ethical speculation, the influence of the *Inquiry* has been of the most extensive and penetrating kind. The *Wealth of Nations* (to call it by the more familiar abbreviation) remains still, and is likely to remain, the most valuable contribution made by any one person to the "science" of Political Economy, whose birth, indeed, its first appearance announced to an expectant world.

It is unnecessary to trace in detail Smith's obligations to his predecessors or contemporaries. His debt to Hutcheson has been well established; and what he owes to Hume is plain enough. It used to be supposed that his indebtedness to the French physiocrats was heavy, but it seems that he had been

[1] *Theory*, ed *cit.*, p. 26.

expounding some of their doctrines in his lectures before their appearance in print. The truth is, of course, that many of the ideas to which Smith gave such clear and forcible expression were "in the air," and were the common property of his generation. He himself would not have been slow to acknowledge the share that men like Hutcheson or Hume had in forming his opinions. But he was naturally a little apprehensive lest his distinctive views should be fathered on persons who had absolutely no claim to be considered their originators. To this risk he considered himself peculiarly liable in consequence both of his situation as a professor, and of his "unreserved communications in private companies." With a view to establishing his exclusive right to "certain leading principles both political and literary," he accordingly drew up a paper which, after his death, came into the possession of Dugald Stewart. Whatever else this document may or may not prove, it demonstrates that, as early as 1755, he maintained the dogma of individualism in that extreme form which was long the badge of the orthodox economic school.

Many of Smith's most cherished tenets have for long been out of fashion, and many others have never had a vogue at all except in the United Kingdom. Yet, while the reputation of many economical thinkers who followed Smith has suffered severely, no one thinks the less of him. This is due partly, perhaps, to the extraordinary extent of the information upon which he based his reasonings (and no one of his time, except Gibbon, can have worked harder), and partly to the cool and deliberate way in which his inferences are deduced. His style is eminently business-like ; yet it is never harsh or crabbed. It is said that in the act of dictation he used to walk up and down his room, rubbing a shoulder as he turned against the wall. Some critics profess to detect the effects of this habit in his writing. His sentences, they say, are much about the same length, and that length was determined by the space of time which each turn of the room occupied. When we

fall in with such theories as this, we are tempted to believe that the critics who broach them must possess to aid their vision "a pair of patent double million magnifying glass microscopes of extra power."

The ordinary reader is certainly ill-qualified to detect such *nuances* of style; but he can have no difficulty in appreciating more palpable characteristics. The following passages are selected for specimens as being not without some application to certain questions of our own day:—

"The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. It is a manifest encroachment upon the just liberty both of the workman and of those who might be disposed to employ him. As it hinders the one from working at what he thinks proper, so it hinders the others from employing whom they think proper. To judge whether he is fit to be employed may surely be trusted to the discretion of the employers, whose interest it so much concerns. The affected anxiety of the lawgiver lest they should employ an improper person, is evidently as impertinent as it is oppressive.

. . . . . .

"People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment and diversion but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices. It is impossible, indeed, to prevent such meetings by any law which either could be executed, or would be consistent with liberty and justice. But though the law cannot hinder people of the same trade from sometimes assembling together, it ought to do nothing to facilitate such assemblies, much less to render them necessary.

"A regulation which obliges all those of the same trade in a particular town to enter their names and places of abode in a public register, facilitates such assemblies. It connects individuals who might never otherwise be known to one another, and gives every man of the trade a direction where to find every other man of it.

"A regulation which enables those of the same trade to tax themselves in order to provide for their poor, their sick, their widows and orphans, by giving them a common interest to manage, may also render such assemblies necessary.

"An incorporation not only renders them necessary, but makes the act of the majority binding upon the whole. In a free trade an effectual combination cannot be established but by the unanimous consent of every single trader, and it cannot last any longer than every single trader continues of the same mind. The majority of a corporation can enact a bye-law with proper penalties, which will limit the competition more effectually and more durably than any voluntary combination whatever.

"The pretence that corporations are necessary for the better government of the trade is without foundation. The real and effectual discipline which is exercised over a workman is not that of his corporation but that of his customers. It is the fear of losing his employment which restrains his frauds and corrects his negligence. An exclusive corporation necessarily weakens the force of this discipline. A particular set of workmen must then be employed, let them behave well or ill. It is upon this account that in many large incorporated towns no tolerable workmen are to be found, even in some of the most necessary trades. If you would have your work tolerably executed, it must be done in the suburbs, where the workmen, having no exclusive privilege, have nothing but their character to depend upon, and you must then smuggle it into the town as well as you can.

"It is in this manner that the policy of Europe, by restraining the competition in some employments to a smaller number than would otherwise be disposed to enter into them, occasions a very important inequality in the whole of the advantages and disadvantages of the different employments of labour and stock."[1]

Next to Hume and Smith, the most eminent Scottish prose writer of his time was William Robertson (1721–93),[2] the eldest son of the minister of Borthwick. Robertson followed in his father's footsteps by entering the ministry of the Church of Scotland, and in 1743 he was appointed to the parish of Gladsmuir. On a yearly stipend not exceeding £100, he there supported his brother and sisters, who had been thrown upon his care by the death of their father and mother. Robertson took as active a part as was possible for him in concerting measures to repel the young Pretender in the '45, and, when

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, bk. i., ch. x., part ii.

[2] *Works*, ed. Alex. Stewart, 12 vols., Edin., 1818; ed. Dugald Stewart, 10 vols., Edin., 1821.

the rebellion was over, began to play that part in the Courts of the Church which led in due course to his being the undisputed leader of the General Assembly. His first publication was a sermon on *The Situation of the World at the time of Christ's appearance* (1755). Three years later he was translated to the charge of Lady Yester's, in Edinburgh, which he gave up in 1761 to go to the Old Greyfriars. There Dr. John Erskine, the chief of the rival party in the General Assembly, presently became his colleague; and the amicable nature of their intercourse has not unnaturally formed the theme of much admiring comment in a country in which religious faction has always run high, and such conspicuous instances of good sense and good feeling have been by no means common.[1]

Meanwhile, in 1759, Robertson had published in London his *History of Scotland*, and the work had achieved instantaneous and great success, particularly on the South side of the border. In 1762 he was appointed Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and in 1763 he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly, besides receiving the dignity of Historiographer for Scotland. In 1769 his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V.* not only enhanced his already high reputation, but enriched him by the substantial amount of £4,500. The *History of America*, which appeared in 1777, though full of striking passages, is perhaps inferior to its predecessor from the same pen; and the *Historical Disquisition* (1791), which closes the list of his works, has probably attracted less notice than any of the rest. The old age of Robertson was happy and serene, as his youth and middle life had been busy and useful. He died too soon to see the successful revival of that school of thought in the Church of Scotland to which he had always been opposed.

High as was the character of the eminent men of letters

[1] See the account of Erskine's preaching in *Guy Mannering* (*Waverley Novels*, 48 vols., vol. iv. p. 99), which winds up with a tribute by Mr. Pleydell to the mutual regard of the two colleagues.

who then were the glory of Edinburgh, there was not one of them who surpassed Robertson in amiability of temper and sweetness of disposition. All who knew, and have attempted to describe, him testify to his integrity and uprightness, his temperance and discretion, his possession, in short, of all the Christian virtues. It is only when the Evangelicals begin to get their horns out in the next century—begin to write violent pamphlets and contribute letters to the newspapers—that we hear whispers against his laxity, not indeed of conduct, but of creed, and catch a hint of solemn doubts whether he really had a grasp of the "gospel."[1] To knowledge of the world he made no pretensions; and even the "lionising" which he had to undergo in London as the result of his literary efforts, left him simple and unsophisticated: a victim of the not unkindly ridicule of "old hands," like his friend Carlyle. He was "a very great master of conversation,"[2] and seems indeed to have excelled all other members of the Edinburgh circle in that department. But this supremacy brought in its train his chief failing: "a strong itch for shining,"[3] which made him sometimes tedious even to his friends. His direction of ecclesiastical affairs was wise and statesmanlike; and the eloquence which enabled him to maintain his predominance in the Assembly was eminently persuasive. Few more attractive personalities present themselves to the student of Scottish Church history.

It would be vain to pretend that the historical works of Robertson have passed the ordeal of more than a century of criticism as triumphantly as the masterpiece of Gibbon. A mass of new evidence has been brought to light, and the generalisations which were justified by the facts at Robertson's command have had to be correspondingly modified. But that Robertson made a conscientious and honest use of the materials

[1] *Vide* Hugh Miller, *Letter to Lord Brougham*, 1839, p. 4: "Aged men who sat under his ministry have assured me that in hurrying over the New Testament he had missed the doctrine of the Atonement."

[2] Carlyle, *Autob.*, p. 285. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

at his disposal no one has seriously or successfully denied. Even at the present day his *View of the Progress of Society in Europe*, prefixed to the *Charles V.*, may still be described as the best essay on its subject, though allowance has to be made for the faults arising from his own temperament and the spirit of his age. Robertson was no "enthusiast," any more than Hume or Adam Smith. But it may well be questioned whether an enthusiast is the best qualified person to deal with, say, the Reformation,[1] so apt is enthusiasm to degenerate into unscrupulous partisanship. He probably failed to do justice to the work of the Church in the dark ages. Yet he is never tempted to cast a halo round the Reformers; and he is wise enough to remember the extreme complexity of the motives and causes at the bottom of any great religious, economic, or social movement. His style partakes of his coolness and prudence. There are no heroics, and praise and blame are scattered with no careless hand, but in strict obedience to the dictates of moderation and good sense.[2] Destitute of idiom or "race," his manner never sinks into slovenliness, and a more flamboyant and ambitious mode of expression would in all likelihood do much less justice to such impressive episodes as the subjugation of Mexico or Peru. In dealing with the thorny questions which beset the history of his own country, he is never betrayed into passion or partiality; and he is throughout laudably free from the provincial type of patriotism from which certain of his countrymen have not been exempt.

[1] Robertson's "phlegmatic account" of the Reformation gave great offence to Mr. William Wilberforce. See his *Practical View*, 5th ed. p. 304.

[2] Johnson thought that Robertson should follow the advice of an old college tutor to one of his pupils, and strike out all his particularly fine passages. (Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Globe ed. 1893, p. 260.) At the same time he owned that if Robertson's style was faulty he owed it to him, Johnson (*ibid.*, p. 420). It is difficult to see why Robertson's style should have been thought to be overloaded with ornament, though no doubt it has none of the easy and delightful fluency of Goldsmith's.

I select for illustration a passage descriptive of the arrival of Columbus in the New World :—

"As they proceeded, the indications of approaching land seemed to be more certain, and excited hope in proportion. The birds began to appear in flocks, making towards the south-west. Columbus, in imitation of the Portuguese navigators, who had been guided in several of their discoveries by the motion of birds, altered the course from due west towards that quarter whither they pointed their flight. But, after holding on for several days in this new direction, without any better success than formerly, having seen no object during thirty days but the sea and sky, the hopes of his companions subsided faster than they had risen ; their fears revived with additional force ; impatience, rage, and despair appeared in every countenance. All sense of subordination was lost : the officers who had hitherto concurred with Columbus in opinion and supported his authority, now took part with the private men ; they assembled tumultuously on the deck, expostulated with their commander, mingled threats with their expostulations, and required him instantly to tack about and return to Europe. Columbus perceived that it would be of no avail to have recourse to any of his former arts, which having been tried so often had lost their effect ; and that it was impossible to rekindle any zeal for the success of the expedition among men in whose breasts fear had extinguished every generous sentiment. He saw that it was no less vain to think of employing either gentle or severe measures to quell a mutiny so general and so violent. It was necessary on all these accounts to soothe passions which he could no longer command, and to give way to a torrent too impetuous to be checked. He promised solemnly to his men that he would comply with their request, provided they would accompany him, and obey his command for three days longer, and if, during that time, land were not discovered, he would then abandon the enterprise, and direct his course towards Spain.

"Enraged as the sailors were, and impatient to turn their faces again towards their native country, this proposition did not appear to them unreasonable. Nor did Columbus hazard much by confining himself to a term so short. The presages of discovering land were now so numerous and promising that he deemed them infallible. For some days the sounding line reached the bottom, and the soil which it brought up indicated land to be at no great distance. The flocks of birds increased, and were composed not only of sea-fowl, but of such land birds as could not be supposed to fly far from the shore. The crew of the *Pinta* observed a cane floating, which

seemed to have been newly cut, and likewise a piece of timber artificially curved. The sailors aboard the *Nina* took up the branch of a tree with red berries, perfectly fresh. The clouds around the setting sun assumed a new appearance; the air was more mild and warm, and, during night, the wind became unequal and variable. From all these symptoms Columbus was so confident of being near land that, on the evening of the 11th of October, after public prayers for success, he ordered the sails to be furled, lest they should be driven ashore in the night. During this interval of suspense and expectation no man shut his eyes; all kept upon deck, gazing intently towards that quarter where they expected to discover the land which had been so long the object of their wishes.

"About two hours after midnight Columbus, standing on the forecastle, observed a light at a distance, and privately pointed it out to Pedro Guttierez, a page of the queen's wardrobe. Guttierez perceived it, and calling to Salcedo, comptroller of the fleet, all three saw it in motion, as if it were carried from place to place. A little after midnight the joyful sound of "Land! land!" was heard from the *Pinta*, which kept always ahead of the other ships. But, having been deceived so often by fallacious appearances, every man was now become slow of belief, and waited in all the anguish of uncertainty and impatience for the return of day. As soon as morning dawned all doubts and fears were dispelled. From every ship an island was seen about two leagues to the north, whose flat and verdant fields, well stored with wood and watered with many rivulets, presented the aspect of a delightful country. The crew of the *Pinta* instantly began the Te Deum, as a hymn of thanksgiving to God, and were joined by those of the other ships, with tears of joy and transports of congratulation. The office of gratitude to heaven was followed by an act of justice to their commander. They threw themselves at the feet of Columbus with feelings of self-condemnation mingled with reverence. They implored him to pardon their ignorance, incredulity, and insolence, which had created so much unnecessary disquiet, and had so often obstructed the prosecution of his well-concerted plan; and, passing in the warmth of their admiration from one extreme to another, they now pronounced the man whom they had lately reviled and threatened to be a person inspired by heaven with sagacity and fortitude more than human, in order to accomplish a design so far beyond the ideas and conception of all former ages."[1]

Substantial as were the services rendered by Principal

[1] *History of America*, in *Works*, ed. Stewart, *ut sup.*, vol. viii. p. 121.

Robertson to literature, it may be questioned whether they were not outweighed by his contributions to the progress of intellect and civilisation generally in Scotland. The Revolution settlement had left outside the pale of the religious establishment the most violent fanatics, whose only resource thereafter was to intrigue with the Roman Catholics for the return of the Stuarts to the throne. But even within the Church there was a residuum of extreme men in whose hands the Act of Anne,[1] which restored patronage to the patrons, placed a powerful weapon. It is, of course, a mistake to suppose that the system of patronage established after the Revolution was one of popular election. The Act 1690, c. 23, had imposed the duty, or conferred the privilege, of choosing ministers upon the Kirk Session, *plus* the heritors, or landed proprietors, in country parishes, and *plus* the magistrates in burghs. Such an arrangement was very far indeed from giving the congregation or the parishioners a commanding voice in the selection of their spiritual guide. But the Act of Anne was unpopular, and thus afforded the ultra-evangelical party a valuable opportunity for "getting up steam" on their side. By insisting in their own peculiar dialect upon some imaginary right inherent in the flock to choose its own herd,[2] they might contrive to secure the acquiescence, if not the active support, of the populace in achieving their praiseworthy objects; the persecution of the Episcopalians, the proscription of the Roman Catholics, the extermination of witches, and the re-establishment of an odious form of ecclesiastical tyranny.

[1] 10 Anne, c. 12.

[2] See Burns, *The Twa Herds*, Stanza iv., *àpropos* of a quarrel between Moodie of Riccarton and Russell of Kilmarnock.

> "O sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit
> Your duty ye wad sae negleckit?
> Ye wha were no by lairds respeckit
> To wear the plaid,
> But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
> To be their guide!"
>
> *Works*, ed. Henley and Henderson, vol. ii. p. 21.

Luckily, after a long course of recalcitrancy against the authority of the Church Courts, during which they were treated with extraordinary indulgence, the extreme left seceded in the fourth decade of the century.

Had the Moderate party been less eminent in ability and respectable in character than it was, the fanatics might have achieved partial success in their aims. If Carlyle, for example, had been their most prominent leader instead of merely an active officer—Carlyle, who was maliciously described by Robertson's evangelical uncle as being "too good company to have any deep tincture of religion"—they might not have been able to appeal to the best instincts of their countrymen with the force they did. Happy is the religious or political party whose destiny is directed by its very best men! Robertson was the complete embodiment in his own person of the virtues of the Moderates, and the scrupulous propriety of his walk and conversation precluded the possibility of any aspersions being cast on his life and character.[1] The Evangelical party was less fortunate. That there were many ministers of that cast of thought who were in no way inferior to their Moderate brethren in learning and refinement, no one who knows anything of the internal history of the Church of Scotland can doubt. But it was not they who came to the front either in literature or the Church Courts. In the latter arena, the protagonist of the party for some years was Alexander Webster (1707–84) a man of immense practical gifts, but of notoriously "convivial" habits. In the former, the works of Thomas Boston (1676–1732)[2] still keep a

[1] "He enjoyed the bounties of providence without running into riot; was temperate without austerity; condescending and affable without meanness; and in expense neither sordid nor prodigal." Thus his colleague, John Erskine, *apud* Dugald Stewart, *Memoir*, p. 134.

[2] Boston's most popular works were his *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, and *The Crook in the Lot*. Though not comparable to the writings of William Law, they are distinguished by a fervour and sincerity which is not unattractive, despite a few ludicrous and undignified touches, and the tone of mysticism which prevails in some passages renders them very acceptable to those who like it.

precarious hold upon the skirts of fame, and the names of John Willison (1680–1750), minister of Dundee, Robert Walker (1716–83), minister of the High Kirk, Edinburgh, and John Witherspoon (1722–94), are remembered by a few. But the mass of the sermons, discourses, and other lucubrations of the "high-flyers" are plunged in oblivion.

From one point of view, then, the era of Robertson was the golden age of the Church of Scotland. Never before or since have her ministers been so learned, and at the same time so free from the *patois* of pedantry or puritanism. Never have they occupied a more creditable position in the society of their own country.[1] The tradition thus established has not been completely maintained, though it has never become extinct. The old Moderate party came to an end with the death of Principal George Hill (1750–1819), who represented its orthodox branch, and whose *View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland* (1817) and *Lectures in Divinity* (1821) are still of high authority. The Broad Church party of the nineteenth century rather lacked the dignity and polish, the fine manner, the eager desire to appeal to the whole world of educated men, which marked the Moderate of the true breed. And if the era of Robertson was the golden age of the Church, it was no less a period of revival for the Universities of Scotland, with which the Church was still so intimately connected, and which since the Revolution had lost much of the glory which was theirs in the seventeenth century. Many of the men who had a large share in promoting this revival have no claim to more than the barest mention in a history of literature; but it were more than ungrateful to omit the names of Dunlop, of Maclaurin, of Simson, of Black, of Cullen, and of the Gregorys—through whose labours, in conjunction with those of many another, the

[1] Some very just observations on the position of the clergy at this period will be found in Mackenzie's *Account* of Home's life, prefixed to Home's *Works*, ed. 1822, vol. i.

Universities were again rendered at once useful and efficient. A survey of the educated world in Scotland from the 'fifteen down to the death of Robertson, will disclose, it is true, many differences of opinion, much futile endeavour, many weaknesses, and even follies, which mar the symmetry of the piece; but it will also reveal a vigorous, indomitable, and concentrated effort to raise Scotland to a level with richer and more highly favoured nations, and to restore to her an honourable place in the community of civilised Europe.

It is some such ambition as this that is put in the forefront of the old *Edinburgh Review*[1]; and it was some such ambition

[1] "*The Edinburgh Review* [To be published every six months], Edinburgh: printed for G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1755. Price 1s." Thus the title page of number 1, which further bears that the work contains an account of all the books and pamphlets that have been published in Scotland from 1st of January to 1st of July, 1755, and promises an appendix to each number "giving an account of the books published in England and other countries that are worthy of notice." Here are the contents of the number:

I. History of Peter the Great.
II. Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy.
III. Moyse's Memoirs of Scottish Affairs.
IV. History of the Rebellion, 1745 and 1746.
V. Mr. John M'Laurin's Sermons.
VI. Mr. Eben. Erskine's Sermons.
VII. Mr. Will. Robertson's Sermon.
VIII. Mr. Fordyce's Sermon.
IX. Dr. Martin's Commentary on Eustachius's Tables.
X. Barclay's Greek Grammar.
XI. Decisions of the Court of Session
XII. Abridgement of the Statutes, &c.
XIII. Mrs. Cleland's Cookery.
XIV. An Analysis of the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq.
XV. Observations on it.
XVI. The Deist stretched on a Death-bed.
XVII. Moderation without Mercy.

The Appendix contains:—

I. Bp. Sherlock's Discourses.
II. Dodsley's Collection of Poems, vol. iv.
III. Johnson's Dictionary [By Adam Smith].
IV. Theron and Aspasio.
V. The Centaur not fabulous.

A tolerably varied bill of fare indeed! The general preface seems to be by Robertson. Mr. Ebenezer Erskine comes in for many shrewd knocks, as does the author of the tracts reviewed in XVI. and XVII. We may suspect the *Review* died not by reason of its severity so much as by reason of the tendency to "log-rolling." All the contributors were on intimate terms with one another, and most of them were authors. Hume seems to have had no active part in the enterprise.

as this that, consciously or unconsciously, fired the remarkable group of men in the Scottish capital of which that short-lived periodical may be said to have been the organ. We have already dealt with the three most illustrious of the band ; its remaining members must be more summarily disposed of.

One of the oldest, as well as oddest, figures in the circle is that of Henry Home, of Kames[1] (1696–1782), who was raised to the bench in 1752 by his territorial title. There were few subjects on which he was not prepared, and to some extent qualified, to pronounce an opinion ; and law, moral philosophy, criticism, history, and agriculture, all in due turn received a share of his attention. He commenced philosopher in the orthodox manner of his age, that is to say, by writing a letter (like Butler and Hutcheson) to Dr. Samuel Clarke ; and we are told that in his youth he was reckoned among the "*Beaux* or fine gentlemen," an Edinburgh group who "united an extensive knowledge of literature, and a cultivated taste, to the utmost elegance of manners, of dress, and of accomplishments."[2] In after life, elegance was certainly not the most striking feature of his usual mode of speech, if all tales are true. It was his lot to come to blows in the latter part of his career with the two most formidable opponents whom it was then possible to meet in controversy. He quarrelled with Warburton on the question, whether ridicule is the test of truth, and he was violently attacked by Voltaire for presuming to admire Shakespeare too much. It is unnecessary to enumerate his works, which comprise an *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, *Elements of Criticism*, and *Sketches of the History of Man*. His intellect was acute,[3] but not well balanced, and he was apt to ride off on highly abstruse metaphysical specula-

[1] *Memoirs*, by Alexander Fraser Tytler, 2 vols., 1807.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 59.

[3] He was sharp enough, for example, to detect that Adam Smith's ethical theories were "only a refinement of the selfish system" (*Memoirs*, vol. i. App. p. 105).

tions, when a little common sense would have better served the turn. But he was a monument of good sense compared with his colleague, James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714–99),[1] whose name has long been a very synonym for mental eccentricity. Monboddo's memory is inseparably associated with the anticipation of what, for "the man in the street," is naturally the cardinal doctrine of Mr. Darwin—the descent of men from monkeys.[2] Picturesque as is his figure, and entertaining as are his peculiarities, it is vain to attempt the resuscitation of his writings, or to maintain the paradox that he made any material contribution to thought. Infinitely more cool-headed and sagacious than either Kames or Monboddo was Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes (1726–92), whose *Annals of Scotland* (1776–79) may not be picturesque, but are based upon a scrupulous adherence to the best original authorities. He had a predecessor on the antiquarian side of his studies in Father Thomas Innes (1662–1714), whose *Critical Essay* (1729) is highly prized; but Dalrymple was a greater even than Innes, and Sir Walter Scott has pronounced a high eulogium upon him as the father of our national history.[3]

The author whom his contemporaries most over-rated was probably Dr. Hugh Blair (*supra*, p. 319), one of the ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. We have already referred to his *Sermons* as typical of the worst sort of eighteenth-century prose, and his *Lectures* (1783) on his professorial subject are not much better, though they have some value as an indication of what it was thought proper to think about literature at the date of their delivery. Blair's great fault is that he can *not* say

[1] Knight, *Lord Monboddo, and some of his Contemporaries*, 1900; *Scots Law Times*, vol. vii. pp. 1 and 9 (a couple of admirable papers by the late Mr. James Marshall); and *Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. ch. 20, *n.* 1.

[2] For a concise yet accurate summary of Monboddo's views, see *Songs and Verses*, by an old contributor to *Maga*, 4th ed., 1875, p. 5.

[3] *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xx. p. 314; vol. xxi. p. 187.

a plain thing in a plain way[1]; nor is he comparable for originality and suggestiveness of view to Principal George Campbell, of Aberdeen (1719–96), whose *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), though somewhat discursive, is by far the most valuable contribution to criticism which came from Scotland during the century. The *Essays on the Nature ana Principles of Taste* (1790) of Archibald Alison, an Episcopal clergyman in Edinburgh, belong to that class of vague writing about æsthetics which makes the hardest reading in the world.[2]

Not the least agreeable of the circle was John Home (1722–1808),[3] sometime minister of Athelstaneford, who is said to have been "truly irresistible," and whose entry to a company was "like opening a window, and letting the sun into a dark room."[4] He possessed the "poetical temperament" in a very marked degree, if the poetical temperament be equivalent to an insatiable appetite for praise; but the modern reader is unable to detect much poetry in his performances. By far his most successful piece was the tragedy of *Douglas*, produced in Edinburgh with immense applause towards the close of 1756, and at Covent Garden in the following year. Its appearance on the stage was the signal for an outburst of bigotry on the part of the "high-flyers," from which his clerical allies manfully endeavoured to shield both him and themselves as best

[1] When he wants to say, for example, that a good writer may be a bad man, he puts it thus: "Elegant speculations are sometimes found to float on the surface of the mind, while bad passions possess the interior of the heart" (Lecture II.). It sounds like a bad parody of Johnson: and all the parodies of Johnson are bad.

[2] One of the "curiosities of criticism" of the century was the attempt of William Lauder (d. 1771) to show that Milton was an unblushing plagiarist. His *Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost* (1750) is as impudent a performance as any age can boast of. Lauder, who edited a collection named *Poetarum Scotorum Musæ Sacræ* (1739), strongly maintained the superiority of Arthur Johnston to George Buchanan as a Latin versifier.

[3] *Works*, with an *Account* of his life, by Mackenzie, 3 vols., Edin., 1822.

[4] Carlyle, *Autob.*, p. 223.

they could. But Home thought it prudent to demit his charge, and they were well pleased to come off with no severer penalty than an admonition. Neither *The Fatal Discovery* (1769), nor *Alonzo* (1773), both of which were presented at Drury Lane under the auspices of Garrick, won anything like the popularity of *Douglas*, whose plot was borrowed from the old ballad of *Gil Morrice*, and one soliloquy from which lingered long into the nineteenth century in schoolrooms and places where they recite. There is nothing distinguished or striking about Home's blank verse; and indeed it abounds with bald and prosaic passages. Much more to the point is his well-known epigram occasioned by the imposition of a heavy duty upon claret. His dramatic tradition was continued by Joanna Baillie (1762–1851), on whom Scott pronounced an unmeasured eulogy,[1] but who is best remembered by *The Chough and Crow*,[2] which is almost as good as some of Scott's in the same vein, and by certain lyrics in the vernacular to be mentioned in their proper place.

But the most important of the *di minores* of the Scottish metropolis was, neither Kames (though Adam Smith described him as the master of the literary men of the time); nor Home (though David Hume pronounced him to possess "the true theatric genius of *Shakespear* and *Otway*, refined from the unhappy barbarism of the one and licentiousness of the other"); nor yet Henry Mackenzie, the longest survivor of that golden age (of whom something falls to be said later on); but, Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh from 1759 to 1785. Ferguson began life as chaplain to the Black Watch, with which regiment he served at Fontenoy, performing prodigies of valour. In spite of a shock of paralysis, he protracted existence to the great age

[1] "When she, the bold enchantress, came
With fearless hand and heart on flame,"
And so forth, in *Marmion*, introduction to Canto iii

[2] In *Orra; a tragedy*, act iii. sc. 1.

of ninety-three by means of a rigid vegetarian diet.[1] Besides a political tract on the militia question, modelled upon Swift, and entitled, *The History of Margaret, otherwise called Sister Peg* (1760), he wrote an *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1766), *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (1772), and a *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (1782). Of these works the most original and interesting is the *Essay*, which discovers all the marks of a vigorous and candid intellect. Ferguson is not to be fobbed off with the fine phrases which conceal error; he insists upon examining everything for himself. It is highly refreshing to come across a work, published in the decade in which Rousseau began to be really powerful for evil, which nevertheless insists that men must be studied "in groups, as they have always subsisted"; in society, not in fictitious isolation. The fallacy involved of setting up an imaginary "state of nature," and drawing a sharp line between natural and civilised man has never been better exposed than in the following passage:—

"Man finds his lodgment alike in the cave, the cottage, or the palace; and his subsistence equally in the woods, in the dairy, or the farm. He assumes the distinction of titles, equipage, and dress; he devises regular systems of government, and a complicated body of laws; or naked in the woods has no badge of superiority but the strength of his limbs and the sagacity of his mind; no rule of conduct but choice; no tie with his fellow creatures but affection, the love of company, and the desire of safety. Capable of a great variety of arts, yet dependent on none in particular for the preservation of his being; to whatever length he has carried his artifice, there he seems to enjoy the conveniences that suit his nature, and to have found the condition to which he is destined. The tree which an American, on the banks of the Oroonoko has chosen to climb for the retreat and the lodgment of his family, is to him a

[1] "The deep interest which he took in the [French] war had long seemed to be the main tie that connected him with passing existence; and the news of Waterloo acted on the aged patriot as a *nunc dimittis*." (Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xix. p. 332).

convenient dwelling. The sopha, the vaulted dome, and the colonnade, do not more effectually content their native inhabitant.

"If we are asked, therefore, Where the state of nature is to be found? we may answer, It is here; and it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan. While this active being is in the train of employing his talents, and of operating on the subjects around him, all situations are equally natural. If we are told, That vice, at least, is contrary to nature; we may answer, It is worse; it is folly and wretchedness. But if nature is only opposed to art, in what situation of the human race are the footsteps of art unknown? In the condition of the savage, as well as in that of the citizen, are many proofs of human invention; and in either is not any permanent station, but a mere stage through which this travelling being is destined to pass. If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is so no less; and the highest refinements of political and moral apprehension, are not more artificial in their kind, than the first operations of sentiment and reason."[1]

It is tempting to linger over this collection of learned, excellent, and polished men; to dwell on John Clerk of Eldin (1728–1812), the author of the *Inquiry into Naval Tactics* (1782); on Dr. John Jardine (1706–66), who excelled in a spontaneous flow of good humour; on Patrick, Lord Elibank (1703–78), perhaps the wittiest of them all; on Charles Townshend (1725–67), the brilliant but unprincipled politician. But we must hasten on, pausing only for a moment at the majestic figure of Alexander Carlyle[2] (1722–1805), known as "Jupiter," to whose autobiography we have had so frequently to acknowledge our indebtedness. Was a little diplomacy required to secure a majority for the Moderates in the General Assembly?—then, who, but the Minister of Inveresk? Was a statesman in London to be convinced of the serious grievances under which the Scottish clergy laboured?—then who, again,

[1] *Essay on Civil Society*, part i. sec. 1.

[2] "His person and countenance, even at a very advanced age, were so lofty and commanding as to strike every artist with his resemblance to the Jupiter Tonans of the Pantheon." (Scott, *Misc. Prose Works* vol. xix. p. 314).

but the Doctor? Lastly, was a new tavern to be discovered for the meetings of the "Poker" or the "Oyster Club"?—Why, once more, Carlyle was the very man to do it. In addition to his invaluable memoirs[1] (which were not published until after the death of Principal Lee to whom he had bequeathed them), he wrote two pamphlets in the ironical vein of Swift: one, *An argument to prove that the Tragedy of* Douglas *ought to be publicly burnt by the Hands of the Hangman* (1757);[2] the other, *Plain reasons for removing a certain great man from his M——y's presence and councils for ever* (1759). But his hours were too much taken up with affairs, with jaunts to England, and with "club-life" (as we should now call it) to leave much time for the muses. That he was a man of great practical, if not of speculative, ability, is certain; that he was at bottom a man of integrity and worth, in spite of his tendency to self-indulgence (not intemperance), is no less sure. For so much the company he kept will answer. We may or may not be able altogether to agree with Mackenzie when he compares the literary society of London, to its great disadvantage, with that of Edinburgh. In London, he says, "all ease of intercourse was changed for the pride of victory, and the victors, like some savage combatants, gave no quarter to the vanquished."[3] This he accounts for by the fact that the literary circle of London was a sort of sect, "a *caste* separate from the ordinary professions and habits of common life." Its members were accordingly apt, like other traders, to bring samples of their wares into company, and were too jealous to enjoy any ex-

[1] Ed. Burton, 1860. Only less interesting and valuable than Carlyle's work, though decidedly inferior in spirit and vitality, is *My Own Life and Times* by Dr. Thomas Somerville (1741–1830), minister of Jedburgh, published in 1861.

[2] He also drew up *A full and true History of the Bloody Tragedy of Douglas*, which, being hawked about the streets, added a couple of nights to the original run of *Douglas* at the Canongate Theatre.

[3] Lockhart brings much the same charge against a section of Edinburgh society in the heyday of the *Edinburgh Review*.

cellence in their competitors. In Edinburgh, on the contrary, were to be found the "free and cordial communication of sentiments, the natural play of fancy and good humour."[1] Be all this as it may, it is, at any rate, highly improbable that a society at once so illustrious and so elegant as that which we have been engaged in considering, will ever be seen again in Edinburgh.[2] The thinking was high, and the living plain; and yet not so plain neither. With the Firth of Forth prolific in excellent oysters, and with the best of claret at eighteen shillings a dozen, the most exacting of philosophers could have little to complain of.

We conclude this chapter by glancing at the founder of what is known as the "Scottish School" of philosophy, and at one of his colleagues in the University of Glasgow, who, though less famous, perhaps, than some of his contemporaries, was second only to the greatest in sheer keenness of intellect.

Thomas Reid (1710–96)[3] was transferred from the charge of the parish of Newmachar to the chair of philosophy in the King's College, Aberdeen, in 1752. While resident in that town, he was largely instrumental in founding the Philosophical Society, which counted Dr. Campbell, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. John Gregory among its members, and to which he communicated much of the material which was collected and arranged in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (1764). In the year of its publication, he succeeded Adam Smith as Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow; an appointment which he resigned in 1781 with a view to the elaboration of his philosophical system. The fruits of his retirement are apparent in

[1] *Account* of Home's life prefixed to his *Works*, ed. *cit.* vol. i. p. 23.

[2] For a comparison between the old order and the new, see Cockburn, *Journal*, 2 vols., Edin., 1874, vol. ii. p. 194 *et seq.* Cockburn, however, thinks that the first thirty years of the nineteenth century more than equalled any period of the eighteenth in brilliance and distinction.

[3] *Works*, ed. Stewart, 4 vols., 1803, ed. Hamilton, 1 vol. (xxiii + 1034 pp. !), 1863; M'Cosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 1875; A. Seth, *Scottish Philosophy*, 2nd ed. 1890.

his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785), and the Essays on the *Active Powers of the Human Mind* (1788).

Reid's importance in the history of philosophy was for long overshadowed, in the first place, by the superior rhetorical gifts of his disciple Dugald Stewart (1753–1828),[1] who in reality added nothing of consequence to his master's work, and in the second place by the overpowering force of Sir William Hamilton's abilities, which many are now disposed to think were sadly wasted in wedding the philosophy of the unconditioned to the philosophy of "common-sense." But in recent years he has been restored to his proper place, and has been recognised as one of the chief agents in the work of reconstructing the fabric of thought and knowledge out of the ruins to which Hume had reduced it. Reid started with the great advantage of seeing how thoroughgoing Hume's scepticism was; and he tells us that it was the *Treatise of Human Nature* which first induced him "to call in question the principles commonly received with regard to the human understanding." "I am persuaded," he says in the dedication to his *Inquiry*, "that absolute scepticism is not more destructive of the faith of a Christian than of the science of a philosopher, and of the prudence of a man of common understanding. I am persuaded that the unjust *live by faith* as well as the *just*; that, if all belief could be laid aside, piety, patriotism, friendship, parental affection, and private virtue would appear as ridiculous as knight-errantry; and that the pursuits of pleasure, of ambition, and of avarice, must be grounded upon belief, as well as those that are honourable and virtuous." He proceeds to undermine Hume's system from the very bottom by denying that (to borrow the dialect of another school) the ultimate elements of experience are un-

[1] Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, 1785–1810. *Works*, ed. Hamilton and Veitch, 11 vols., 1854–58. They include *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792), *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* (1793), and *Philosophical Essays* (1810).

related units or sense atoms. Reid's contention could not be more succinctly stated than it is by Professor Pringle Pattison.[1] "The unit of knowledge is not an isolated impression but a judgment; and in such a judgment is contained, even initially, the reference both to a permanent subject and to a permanent world of thought, and, implied in these, such judgments, for example, as those of existence, substance, cause, and effect. Such principles are not derived from sensation, but are 'suggested' on occasion of sensation, in such a way as to constitute the necessary conditions of our having perceptive experience at all."

Reid's philosophy has also suffered to some extent from his employment of so ambiguous an expression as "common-sense." Passages like the following "brust" of eloquence are not likely to restore confidence in that touchstone, or its champion :—

"Admired Philosophy! daughter of light! parent of wisdom and knowledge! if thou art she, surely thou has not yet arisen upon the human mind, nor blessed us with more of thy rays than are sufficient to shed a darkness visible upon the human faculties, and to disturb that repose and security which happier mortals enjoy, who never approached thine altar, nor felt thine influence! But if, indeed, thou hast not power to dispel those clouds and phantoms which thou hast discovered or created, withdraw this penurious and malignant ray; I despise Philosophy and renounce its guidance—let my soul dwell with Common Sense."

But, in making his appeal to Common Sense, Reid did not desire to take the judgment of "the man in the street." He meant to appeal to those principles which are common to the understanding of all men, and which are the indispensable conditions precedent to an act of judgment on the part of any one. It is not often that he indulges in such meaningless and ineffectual flights as this; and the following passage gives a much more favourable and at the same time just impression of his normal style :—

[1] *Encycl. Brit.* art. Reid.

"Suppose that once, and only once, I smelled a tuberose in a certain room, where it grew in a pot and made a very grateful perfume. Next day I relate what I saw and smelled. When I attend as carefully as I can to what passes in my mind in this case, it appears evident that the very thing I saw yesterday, and the fragrance I smelled, are now the immediate objects of my mind, when I remember it. Further, I can imagine this pot and flower transported to the room where I now sit, and yielding the same perfume. Here likewise it appears, that the individual thing which I saw and smelled, is the object of my imagination.

"Philosophers indeed tell me that the immediate object of my memory and imagination in this case, is not the past sensation, but an idea of it, an image, phantasm, or species of the odour I smelled: that this idea now exists in my mind, or in my sensorium; and the mind, contemplating this present idea, finds it a representasion of what is past, or of what may exist; and accordingly calls it memory or imagination. This is the doctrine of the ideal philosophy; which we shall not now examine, that we may not interrupt the thread of the present investigation. Upon the strictest attention, memory appears to me to have things that are past, and not present ideas, for its object. We shall afterwards examine this system of ideas, and endeavour to make it appear, that no solid proof has ever been advanced of the existence of ideas; that they are a mere fiction and hypothesis, contrived to solve the phænomena of the human understanding; that they do not at all answer this end; and that this hypothesis of ideas or images of things in the mind, or in the sensorium, is the parent of those many paradoxes, so shocking to common sense, and of that scepticism which disgrace our philosophy of the mind, and have brought upon it the ridicule and contempt of sensible men.

"In the meantime, I beg leave to think, with the vulgar, that, when I remember the smell of the tuberose, that very sensation which I had yesterday, and which has now no more any existence, is the immediate object of my memory; and when I imagine it present, the sensation itself, and not any idea of it, is the object of my imagination. But, though the object of sensation, memory, and imagination, be in this case the same, yet these acts or operations of the mind are as different, and as easily distinguishable, as smell, taste and sound. I am conscious of a difference in kind between sensation and memory, and between both and imagination. I find this also, that the sensation compels my belief of the present existence of the smell, and memory my belief of its past existence. There is a smell is the immediate testimony of sense; there was a smell is the im-

mediate testimony of memory. If you ask me, why I believe that the smell exists, I can give no other reason, nor shall be ever able to give any other, than that I smell it. If you ask, why I believe that it existed yesterday, I can give no other reason but that I remember it. Sensation and memory, therefore, are simple, original, and perfectly distinct operations of the mind, and both of them are original principles of belief." [1]

John Millar (1735–1801) passed advocate in 1760, and in the following year accepted the chair of Law in Glasgow College, whence he was able, owing to the latitude which his subject allowed him,[2] to promulgate his opinions upon a great variety of topics. In politics he was the strongest of Whigs, though in metaphysics his views coincided with Hume's; and at a later date he belonged to the "Society of the Friends of the People." These proclivities caused him to be distrusted by many an honest parent. Jeffrey's father refused to permit his son to attend Millar's class; and Carlyle has a story of how a certain Mr. Colt dissuaded Sir Hew Dalrymple from putting his son under Millar's charge.[3] There is only one voice, however, as to Millar's intellectual energy and zeal, as to the "magical vivacity" of his conversation, and as to his intrepidity and resource in argument or debate. He has left us two interesting memorials of his abilities. *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771)[4] is a work which has won high praise from modern experts in anthropology on account of its comparatively full discussion of the position of woman in primitive and savage communities, and it may still be read by the layman with profit. The style approaches, perhaps, more closely to that of Mr. John Mill than does the style of any other writer. The *Historical View of the English*

[1] *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, ch. ii. sec. 3.

[2] In the eighteenth century, the Professor of Law taught, or might have taught, or ought to have taught, *inter alia*, civil law, Scots law, constitutional law and history, conveyancing, mercantile law, and the law of England. See pamphlet by W. G. Miller, *The University of Glasgow: the position and wants of the Faculty of Law*, Glasgow, 1901.

[3] *Autob.*, p. 493.

[4] Ed. Craig, Edin., 1806.

Government (1786),[1] which was dedicated to Fox, is naturally of a more controversial character, and finds an excellent object of attack in the *History* of Hume. Yet it is worth reading, in part, at all events, as an exposition of plain Whig principles, to which the author's devotion is so consistent that he expressly denounces the "dexterity and villany of Cromwell in seating himself on the throne of England with greater power than had ever been enjoyed either by James or by Charles."[2] His manner of writing occasionally lapses into the flowery.[3] No successful professor could venture to dispense altogether with such a well-proved device for securing his hearers' attention. But, as a rule, his writing is business-like, and free from intentional, as from undesigned, obscurity.

The reader may have expected to find in this chapter an account of that "very good-humoured, very agreeable, and very mad"[4] person, James Boswell (1740–95), who mingled with the best society of Edinburgh, and in whom inquisitiveness, the love of notoriety, and a lively interest in his neighbour's affairs were carried to such a pitch as to amount to unmistakable and unqualified genius. Boswell, however, was not so much a typical Scot as a citizen of the world, and it may be suspected that he felt more at home in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, and in the company of Johnson, than on the plainstanes, or in the Outer House, or in the society of Hume and Robertson. His two great works, therefore, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1786) and *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791), belong, in virtue of their hero, as well as of their own quality, to the literature of England rather than to that of Scotland, and perhaps the best proof of this assertion lies in the fact that there is practically nothing in them which an Englishman cannot

[1] Four vols., 1803. [2] *Historical View*, ed. *cit.*, vol. iii. p. 332.

[3] *E.g.*, "The modest graces wing their flight from the revels of Bacchus" (*ibid.* vol. iv. p. 209).

[4] Burton, *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 307.

appreciate and enjoy to the full as much as a Scot. While, therefore, it may well be a legitimate source of pride to the patriot that the two great biographies in the language are the work of Scotsmen, we take leave to content ourselves, for the reasons stated, with this brief mention of the author of one of them.[1]

[1] By much the best account of Boswell will be found in Elwin's *Some XVIII. Century Men of Letters*, 2 vols., 1902, vol. ii. pp. 237 *et seq.* To this it would be impossible to add anything profitable.

CHAPTER VII

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POETRY : BURNS

Poetry is an art more provocative of imitation than prose; and it is not surprising that, when to excel in the use of English and to eschew the Scots dialect became the mark of an enlightened mind and a cultivated taste, a considerable number of Scottish writers should have betaken themselves to verse as their form of literary expression. In too many of these it is impossible, even for partiality, to ignore "the vain stiffness of a lettered Scot." But they must all be supposed to have served some purpose, and it is proposed to take a brief survey of their performances before passing on to the vernacular poetry, in which we shall find a great deal more that is worth dwelling on.

By far the greatest poet and most accomplished artist of the Scots versifiers who wrote in English during the eighteenth century was James Thomson (1700–48), a native of Ednam in Roxburghshire, and a son of the manse. *The Seasons* (1726–30) and *The Castle of Indolence* (1746) are poems which well repay minute examination and detailed criticism, though the lyric, *Rule Britannia* (1740), is better remembered by the general. But they belong essentially to English literature, on which the former exerted no little influence, and of which both are justly esteemed among the most pleasing ornaments of the second class. To treat Thomson as a characteristically Scottish poet would be as absurd as to devote time and space

to Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735),[1] whose proper place is with the London wits of the age of Anne and of the first two Georges. Similar considerations recommend an equally summary treatment of Dr. John Armstrong, whose *Economy of Love* (1736), doubtless for excellent reasons, does not appear in Anderson or Chalmers, nor yet in any edition of his works that I have been fortunate enough to fall in with; whose *Art of Preserving Health* (1744) is better than its title might lead one to expect; and whose *Taste: An Epistle to a young Critic* (1753) is a satire of the familiar type in rhymed heroics. His brother in medicine, Dr. Smollett, was a greater favourite of the muses. *The Tears of Scotland* (1746) is a piece very creditable to his good feeling; the *Ode to Leven Water*, which appeared in *Humphry Clinker* (1771), is more excellent still; and if the *Ode to Independence* (1773) had fulfilled the promise of its opening lines,[2] we had been blessed in him with a writer of odes superior to most of his rivals in that sort of composition, and perhaps not so very far beneath the level of Gray himself.

Robert Blair (1699–1746) was not one of those who followed the road to London; and he died, as he had lived for fifteen years, minister of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian, in which cure he was the predecessor of John Home. His poem, *The Grave* (1743), enjoyed unbounded popularity both in its own day, and at a much later period. Suggested, it may be, by Young's *Night Thoughts*, the first instalment of which had appeared in the preceding year, it has, at all events, the merit of comparative brevity, and it works, with considerable skill, the vein of gloom which that long-winded exercise in blank verse opened, and which found such favour with the public of the eighteenth century. In the structure and cadence of his measures, however, Blair owes very little to

[1] *Life and Works*, ed. Aitken, Oxford, 1892.

[2] "Thy spirit, Independence! let me share,
Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,"

Young ; but rather, as Mr. Saintsbury has pointed out,[1] stands debtor to the Elizabethan dramatists. Certainly there is no echo of Thomson, or of any other writer of blank verse later than the Elizabethans, in the concluding passage of a poem, in which good single lines are not infrequent, but which contains nothing else of such refreshing and unexpected beauty :—

> "Thus at the shut of even the weary bird
> Leaves the wide air, and, in some lonely brake,
> Cowers down and dozes till the dawn of day,
> Then claps his well-fledged wings and bears away."

David Hume was always willing to give to any of his friends the "hand" which "every fellow likes." He indulged in extravagant eulogy of John Home's *Douglas ;* and another poet whom he went out of his way to praise at considerable length was William Wilkie (1721–72), the minister of Ratho, and Professor of Natural Philosophy at St. Andrews. Wilkie was a man of real erudition, though of the most eccentric manners ;[2] and in 1757 he published a classical epic, entitled the *Epigoniad*, in nine books and about six thousand lines. This masterpiece was thought, perhaps by Wilkie, and certainly by Wilkie's friends, to afford a striking proof of the vast strides which Scotland had made along the road which leads from barbarism and ignorance to refinement and learning. Nevertheless, the *Critical Review*, then under the editorship of Smollett, had spoken disrespectfully of the great work on its first appearance, and had called attention to certain mistakes in expression and prosody by which it was disfigured. To repair this injustice, Hume addressed a long letter to "the authors" of that periodical in 1759, in which, after premising that "no literary journal was ever carried on in this country with equal spirit and impartiality," he goes on to extenuate the faults

[1] *The English Poets*, ed. Ward, vol. iii., 1900, p. 217.

[2] Charles Townshend told Alexander Carlyle "that he had never met with a man who approached so near the two extremes of a god and a brute as Wilkie did" (Carlyle, *Autob.*, p. 394).

complained of on the ground that they proceeded "entirely from the author's being a Scotchman, who had never been out of his own country," and then engages in a defence of the book, pointing out its merits, and illustrating them by quotations. A more curious piece of fatuity was never perpetrated by a genius of the first order than this critical essay of Hume's. So at least it is apt to strike a generation whose standards of taste are very different from his. No amount of special pleading will make the *Epigoniad* a great poem. It is well enough in its way, and is preferable to Glover's *Leonidas* or *Athenaid*. The episode of the Cyclops, for example, in book iv., might be worse, though even there Wilkie never comes up to the not very exacting measure of Pope's, or Broome's, *Odyssey*. The whole thing is "as dead as mutton"; it is the offspring of convention and rule, not of passion, or sensibility, or vision. Wilkie's *Fables* (1768) are very much better, though far from being in the front rank of such trifles, with the possible exception of *The Hare and the Partan*, which is in the vernacular of the Lothians.

Nor is it possible to be at all enthusiastic over *The Shipwreck* (1762) of William Falconer (1732–69), a piece of frigid classicism, memorable chiefly as affording, in an occasional cadence or turn of phrase, some anticipation of Crabbe's manner. It is difficult even to counterfeit interest in the fortunes of Palemon, and Albert, and Anna; and if the reading of the poem once begun is not soon desisted from, it is because of the peculiar fascination which arises from the mingling of two such incongruous elements as the poetical diction of the eighteenth century and the terms of the seaman's art. The result is so quaint that a specimen may be pardoned:—

> "A lowering squall obscures the southern sky,
> Before whose sweeping breath the waters fly;
> Its weight the topsails can no more sustain—
> Reef topsails, reef! the master calls again.

> The halyards and top bow-lines soon are gone,
> To clue lines and reef tackles next they run :
> The shivering sails descend ; the yards are square ;
> Then quick aloft the ready crew repair :
> The weather earings and the lee they past,
> The reefs enrolled and every point made fast.
> . . . . .
> Deep on her side the reeling vessel lies :
> Brail up the mizen quick ! the master cries,
> Man the clue-garnets ! let the main-sheet fly !
> It rends in thousand shivering shreds on high !"[1]

The contrast between this stilted and lumbering stuff and the rapid and masterly handling of technicalities displayed, say, in *M^c^Andrew's Hymn*[2] is striking and suggestive.

James Beattie (1735–1803) may not have been an acute metaphysician (and he signally failed to demolish Hume), or a cool-headed critic (for he fell a willing victim to the famous Macpherson imposture), or yet a great poet (for he never seems quite to know what he would be at). But at least he deserves our thanks for the effort he made to escape from the common groove, and to provide the public with a commodity bearing a stronger superficial resemblance to poetry than the *Epgoniads* and *Shipwrecks* could boast of. He did not, indeed, altogether abandon the rhymed heroic couplet, and his lines *On the proposed monument to Churchill* (1765)[3] are a typical

[1] *The Shipwreck*, canto ii. ; cp. Lyndsay's *Satyre*, *supra*, p. 98.

[2] Kipling, *Writings*, ed. de luxe, vol. xi. p. 227. The *Hymn* is one of the very few things written of a Scotsman by an Englishman to which the most captious of North Britons can take little exception. Yet even it is marred by a cockney rhyme near the end, bad enough in itself, but particularly inept in such a setting.

[3] The opening lines run as follows :—

> "Bufo begone ; with thee may Faction's fire
> That hatched thy salamander-fame expire.
> Fame, dirty idol of the brainless crowd,
> What half-made moon-calf can mistake for good !
> Since shared by knaves of high and low degree ;
> Cromwell and Catiline : Guido Faux and thee," &c., &c.

For the rest, the piece is creditable to Beattie's patriotism if to nothing else. The Scots had a long score to settle with Churchill.

specimen of the conventional satire: not without vigour and point, but immeasurably below satire as it comes from the hands of a true master, like Pope. In the *Hermit* he employs with laudable freedom and ease a galloping sort of measure, in considerable request for bacchanalian lyrics, to which class that poem does not belong; and in his *chef d'œuvre*, *The Minstrel* (1770–74), he betakes himself to the Spenserian stanza, to write in which was a favourite exercise of almost all the poets and poetasters of the age from Thomson (or indeed from Prior and Pope) down to William Julius Mickle (1734–88), the translator of the *Lusiad*, the reputed author of at least one spirited and popular song in his national dialect, and the undoubted author of the ballad of *Cumnor Hall*, which fascinated the youthful ear of Scott. Beattie seems to share with many of his fellow versifiers the suspicion that there is something inherently and incurably ridiculous in the Spenserian stanza. He, like them, appears never to get rid of the feeling that he is writing a parody. And accordingly, every now and then, he gives to his verse a ludicrous turn, of which, it must in fairness be owned, the metre of Spenser when wedded to commonplace and degrading ideas is readily susceptible, owing to the lofty and ennobling associations with which that poet invested it.[1] Hence a want of steady aim, an infirmity of artistic purpose, is very noticeable in the *Minstrel*, which is disjointed in structure and confused in arrangement. Yet Beattie, one may venture to think, had some true feeling for what we call nature, and was not insensible to the charm of the "melodies of morn," or the "sheep-fold's simple bell," or "the full choir that wakes the universal grove," or any of the other phenomena which he notes and records, in a vocabulary that was, unfortunately, not yet emancipated from the thraldom of "poetic" convention. The following stanzas, though the first is more in his jocose than in his

[1] The same tendency is strongly marked in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*.

serious vein, may serve to give a tolerably accurate idea of his versification :—

> "The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
> Who scar'dst the vision with thy clarion shrill,
> Fell chanticleer ! who oft hath reft away
> My fancied good, and wrought substantial ill !
> O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
> Let harmony aye shut her gentle ear :
> Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
> Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
> And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear !
>
> Forbear, my muse. Let love attune thy line.
> Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
> For how should he at wicked chance repine
> Who feels from every change amusement flow ?
> Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
> As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
> Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
> Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
> A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are born."

The names of Michael Bruce (1746–67) and John Logan (1748–88)[1] recall a rather squalid, but at the same time characteristic, controversy: On the death of the former, the latter obtained Bruce's manuscripts and papers from his father, with a view to their publication, and in 1770 brought out a volume purporting to contain Bruce's poems, together with some pieces by other hands. Bruce's relations, according to the story, were astonished to find that the youth's "Gospel Sonnets" were not included in this collection, and the suspicion of unfair dealing on the part of Logan became to their minds a certainty when in 1781 Logan published a volume of his own poems in which were to be found certain sacred verses alleged to be Bruce's, and an amended version

[1] Bruce, *Works*, ed. Grosart, 1865 ; ed. Stephen, 1895. Both these editors are of the Bruce faction, as was Principal Shairp. See *Good Words*, 1873. For the Logan side, see *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, July, 1877, and April and October, 1879.

of an *Ode to the Cuckoo*, which had formed part of the 1770 publication. On the one hand, then, it is said that Logan deliberately turned Bruce's manuscripts to his own account, and falsely claimed to be the author of poems which he had never written : on the other hand, this accusation is indignantly denied, and, though it is admitted that Logan's conduct and behaviour were not always such as becomes a minister of the gospel, his authorship of the *Ode* and of sundry other pieces in dispute is strenuously maintained. The evidence in support of either contention is extremely unsatisfactory. There is a vast amount of hearsay, and a great deal about manuscripts which A said that B told him that C had seen. Local patriotism has, of course, stepped in to supply deficiencies in solid fact, and, the village of Kinnesswod being inferior in population and importance to the port of Leith, the clamour of the Bruce faction has naturally been shriller and more insistent than that of Logan's partisans. Moreover, Logan's is not so picturesque a figure as that of the youthful poet, nor has he the moral support of an aged parent. Also, it may be questioned whether the participators in this wretched squabble have always taken pains to forget that Bruce was a Seceder, whereas Logan belonged to the Establishment, and was a Moderate.

The one thing certain is that, apart from the grave aspersions cast upon Logan's personal character, the matter is not worth fighting about. The *Ode to the Cuckoo*, round which the battle has raged most hotly, is a poor enough affair in all conscience.[1] It contains two really good lines, and only two :—

[1] Burke, it is true, described it as "the most beautiful lyric in our language." But literary criticism was not Burke's forte. It will be remembered how he cites the instance of Dr. Thomas Blacklock (1721–91), who was blind from his birth, in support of the proposition that a poet need not have a clear conception of the external objects he professes to describe (*Sublime and Beautiful*, part v. sec. v.). To the modern critic the illustration seems to prove exactly the contrary.

"Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year."

The rest of it is essentially commonplace, and in parts indisputably pedestrian. No man need be ambitious to be reckoned the author of such a quatrain as this :—

"O could I fly, I'd fly with thee :
We'd make with social wing
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring."

In the 1770 version, there is one line which positively declines to scan. This was corrected in the later edition, and indeed all the changes made by Logan are for the better. As for Bruce's acknowledged work, it may be wonderful for his age, and considering the circumstances of his upbringing ; but it will not suffer the application of any reasonably high standard. That his imitative faculty was strong is manifest. Not only does he follow the "classical" convention with abject fidelity, calling his friend Mr. Arnot, for instance, in *Lochleven*, by the name of Agricola, but he makes no scruple of appropriating ear-marked words and phrases from his models. *The Elegy to Spring* is neither more nor less than a palpable imitation of Gray. It is perhaps a misfortune for the memory of this hapless young man that his champions should persist in attributing to his praiseworthy efforts, not merely comparative, but, absolute merit. Were it not for their misdirected zeal, it would be superfluous to subject them to any serious examination.

In addition to the volume of poems already referred to Logan was responsible for a tragedy, entitled *Runnamede*, which, like Home's *Douglas*, gave great offence to the "wild" party in the Church. But it is not as a dramatist, or an original poet, that he deserves to be held in remembrance. His claim upon the regard of posterity is founded on the *Translations and Paraphrases in verse of several passages of Sacred Scripture*

(1781),[1] collected and prepared by a Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in order to be sung in churches. Of this anthology, which consists of sixty-seven "paraphrases" and five "hymns," Logan was to all intents and purposes the editor. Addison, Watts, Doddridge, and other less eminent writers were drawn upon; and in the case of almost all, save Addison, considerable alterations were made upon the original text. The practice of emendation in such circumstances is, as a rule, highly reprehensible. But in this case it was abundantly justified by success. Scarce one of the modifications which we owe to Logan but is a self-evident improvement; scarce one but vouches for his true ear, sound judgment, and correct taste. The *Paraphrases* form incomparably the best collection of sacred lyrics (or "Gospel sonnets"), for its size, which has ever been made in the English language. Devout, dignified, and reticent, they afford a truly admirable medium for expressing the religious feelings and aspirations of an intelligent, educated, and self-respecting people. Their genuine piety is untainted by extravagance, their grave severity unruffled by hysteria. They that seek for glitter, and banality, and noise, must turn to the more comprehensive volumes of a later date, whence they will not be sent empty away. It is one of the most significant symptoms of the degeneration which, as some believe, is overtaking the Scottish character, that this excellent little collection is falling into something like desuetude in public worship.

The "classical" tradition was sufficiently prolific. It produced some one's Albania (1737) in blank verse and the *Clyde* (1764) of John Wilson (1720–89) in rhymed heroics, both typical specimens of their kinds. It may also be said to have been an unconscionable time in dying, and its extinction by no means coincides with the close of the eighteenth century. A particularly favourable specimen of what it could

[1] See Maclagan, *Scottish Paraphrases*, Edin., 1889.

produce is to be found in the *Scenes of Infancy* (1803) of John Leyden, who will have to be adverted to in another connection.

> "The waning harvest moon shone cold and bright;
> The warder's horn was heard at dead of night;
> And as the massy portals wide were flung,
> With stamping hoofs the rocky pavement rung."

Such lines are at all events much preferable to the performances of the amiable James Grahame (1765–1811), advocate, and clerk in holy orders of the Church of England. Blank verse was the metre of Grahame's choice, and the excellence of his intention will scarce atone for the futility of his execution. *The Rural Calendar*, *The Birds of Scotland*, and *The Sabbath* (1803), his *chef d'œuvre*, are conventional, ineffective, and tedious. But he deserves a niche in the Caledonian Temple of fame for the following exquisite example of the genuine "poetic diction," culled from his versified ornithology :—

> "Within the fabric rude
> Or e'er the new moon waxes to the full
> The assiduous dam eight spotted spheroids sees."

Few poets have surpassed this elegant periphrasis for eggs. The last of the "classical" Anglo-Scottish poets who need be mentioned is Robert Pollok (1798–1827), a native of Renfrewshire, who become a Seceder Minister. The *Course of Time* (1827) enjoyed great renown in its day. John Wilson greeted it with loud applause; and the moral lessons it inculcates were justly thought to be beyond exception. But all its choice passages—even the once celebrated screed on Byron—are of no significance for the present generation; and Pollok, for us, is merely one of the not insignificant band of his countrymen who with indomitable perseverance have confronted the obstacles presented by narrow means and humble circumstances, only to perish in the very moment when victory has been achieved.

In the Scottish vernacular verse of the eighteenth century we possess one of the happiest illustrations of what is called a "school" of poetry, culminating in the supreme achievement of an acknowledged and unsurpassed master. The members of the school were numerous, and were drawn from every class of the community and almost every part of the country. But there is a certain unity of tone and feeling, as well as of method and craftsmanship, in the work of all of them. None of them attempted to be "original" in the hackneyed sense of the word. Each tried to accommodate his effort to some old and well-proved convention. The new wine was put into old bottles, so to say; but the old bottles stood the strain. And from many men whom it would be affectation to class as great poets there emanated lyrics which only a practised and delicate sense of discrimination can distinguish from the writing of men whose pre-eminence it were no less affectation to dispute. The rhythms, the metres, the manner which had been established as the invariable concomitants of Scots poetry upwards of two centuries before, were once more summoned to the poet's aid; and "emulation" (an almost technical term with Burns in discussing his art) accomplished what less judicious and well-regulated ambition had probably failed to perform.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the religious or, rather, ecclesiastical gloom in which the Scots had been involved for a hundred years and more began to be dissipated. The nation had time to take breath, and to recall the "makaris" and singers in whom generations less sophisticated with theological subtleties had taken unaffected delight, and whose memory had never become wholly obliterated. The *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots poems both ancient and modern* (1706–11) put forth by James Watson (d. 1722) doubtless met some public demand, and being, as its preface tells us, "the first of its nature which has been published in our own native Scots

dialect," it marks the beginning of a vigorous revival of interest in the poetry of the vernacular. The contents of the work are extremely varied. They embrace many English pieces, like Montrose's verse, Sir George Mackenzie's *Caelia's Country-house and Closet*, and Colonel Cleland's *Halloo my Fancie, whither wilt thou go?;* macaronics like Drummond's *Polemo-Middinia;* and Scots poems like Montgomerie's *The Cherry and the Slae*, and *Christis Kirk on the Green.* The most valuable and interesting ingredients of the miscellany, however, are Sempill's *Piper of Kilbarchan* and *Sanny Brigs;* Hamilton of Gilbertfield's *Bonny Heck;* the octosyllabics on the old theme of the fashionable extravagances of the age, entitled *The Speech of a Fife Laird;* and, above all, the *Blythsome Bridal*, a jingle of rare spirit and gusto. The following catalogue of typical Scots "vivers" might well be set for translation and paraphrase in schools where such exercises are indulged in :—

"There will be Tartan, Dragen, and Brachen,
And fouth of good gappocks of Skate;
Pow-sowdie and Drammock and Crowdie,
And callour Nowt-feet in a plate;
And there will be Partans and Buckies,
Speldens and Haddocks anew;
And sing'd Sheepsheads and a Haggize,
And Scadlips to sup till ye're fow.

There will be good lappered-milk Kebucks,
And Sowens, and Farles, and Baps,
And Swats and scraped Paunches,
And Brandie in stoups and in caps.
And there will be Meal Kail and Castocks,
And Skink to sup till you rive,
And Rosts to rost on a brander,
Of Flouks that was taken alive."

Of this lyric, as of *The Barring of the Door*, *Leader Haughs*

and Yarrow,[1] *Maggie Lauder*, *Maggie's Tocher*, *My Jo Janet*, *Toddlin' Hame*, and a host of other pieces, the origin and date are unknown, or, at best, uncertain. As in the case of the ballads, already discussed, we may be pretty sure that they did not spring automatically from a common artistic consciousness, or unconsciousness, but that some one man was originally responsible for bringing them into the world. As they flew *viva per ora virum*, they became modified according to the intelligence and taste of the transmitter. Sometimes they were improved, sometimes they suffered, in the process. But of none perhaps can we positively say that we possess the text in the state in which it left the author's hands, and, in point of fact, many have been touched up deliberately and not by accident. It was the Scots tradition to seize upon some snatch of ancient song and write a new poem up to and about it. The method had its advantages and its drawbacks. Some of those who practised it (not very many, be it said) were tasteless botchers. The greatest of all the

[1] So haunting are the rhythm and melody of this well-known poem and so exquisite is the art with which the names of localities are introduced, that no apology is needed for presenting the reader with a couple of stanzas :—

"Sing *Erceldoune* and *Cowdenknowes*,
Where *Homes* had ance commanding ;
And *Dryegrange* with thy milk-white ewes,
'Twixt *Tweed* and *Leader* standing :
The bird that flies through *Reedpath* trees,
And *Gledswood* banks ilk morrow,
May chant and sing, sweet *Leader-Haughs*,
And bonny howms of *Yarrow*.

"But minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age,
That fleeting time procureth ;
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blyth fowk kend nae sorrow,
With *Homes* that dwelt on *Leader* side,
And *Scots* that dwelt on *Yarrow*."

Tea-Table Miscellany, ed. 1762, p. 181.

vampers was a genius, whose touch transformed the poorest dross into gold. If we consider the fate of *Auld Lang Syne* we see the best and the worst of the system. In Watson's *Collection* we find an Anglicised version, possibly by Sir Robert Ayton, which is respectable but not much more :—

"Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone ?
Is thy kind heart now grown so cold
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On Old-long-syne ?

. . . . . .

"But since that nothing can prevail,
And all hope is in vain,
From these rejected eyes of mine
Still showers of tears shall rain :
And though thou hast me now forgot,
Yet I'll continue thine,
And ne'er forget for to reflect
On Old-long-syne." [1]

Allan Ramsay caught the hint, and turned out something even more frigid and uninspiring :—

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
Tho' they return with scars?
These are the noble hero's lot,
Obtained in glorious wars :
Welcome, my Varo, to my breast,
Thy arms about me twine,
And make me once again as blest
As I was lang syne." [2]

Finally came "the immortal exciseman," and what he made of it, even an Englishman may be supposed to know. So that, on the whole, when the drawbacks and the advantages of the

[1] *Old-long-syne*, First Part, Watson, part iii. p. 71.
[2] *Tea-Table Miscellany*, ed. 1762, p. 49.

tradition are weighed against one another, it is by no means clear that we have not come off a good deal better than we should have done had the primitive texts descended to us in all their purity, and the Scots poets betaken themselves to the discovery of new modes of expression.[1]

Watson was excellent, so far as he went. But the collections which did for the songs of Scotland what Tom Durfey[2] had done for those of England, and a great deal more, were the work of Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), a native of Leadhills, in Lanarkshire, who became first a barber and periwig-maker and afterwards a bookseller in Edinburgh. The contents of his *Evergreen* (1724) are chiefly derived from the Bannatyne MS. (*supra* p. 207), and consist of old poems like *Christis Kirk on the Green*, *The Thistle and the Rose*, *Robeno and Makyne*, and so forth. The *Tea-table Miscellany* (1724–40),[3] on the other hand, exhibits the lyrical side of Scots poetry, and with all its faults is a most meritorious anthology. "Our Scots tunes," as Ramsay not unjustly says, "have an agreeable gaiety and natural sweetness that make them acceptable wherever they are known, not only among ourselves, but in other countries." Accordingly he set himself, with the assistance of certain "ingenious young gentlemen," to provide sets of verses, modelled more or less closely upon those handed down by tradition, which should be not unworthy of the airs with which they were to be conjoined. The "ingenuity" of the editor and his subordinates may sometimes have been misplaced, and their zeal may have outrun discretion; but it cannot be doubted that Ramsay has preserved much for us

[1] It is difficult, nevertheless, for the perplexed commentator, who finds the same song attributed to perhaps half a dozen different authors, to avoid sharing Burns's "heart-ache" at the anonymity of "the men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics" (Burns to Thomson, November 19, 1794, Currie, *Works*, ed. 1800, vol. iv. p. 205).

[2] *Wit and Mirth: or, Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 6 vols., 1719–20.

[3] Reprinted, 2 vols., Glasgow, 1871.

that might otherwise have been irrevocably lost. And what is particularly noticeable in him is his fearless and confident assertion of the claims of the national muse. Foreign decorations and accessories are to be avoided. "The morning rises as she does in the Scottish horizon. We are not carried to Greece or Italy for a shade, a stream, or a breeze. The groves rise in our valleys, the rivers flow from our own fountains, and the winds blow upon our own hills."[1] This is the very spirit of Burns.

Ramsay himself was the chief contributor to his *Miscellany*, and many of the specimens of his work—not perhaps, always the best—won great popularity. In merit, they vary considerably. Now and then he "tunes his lyre" to a purely English strain; but it is difficult to be enthusiastic over

> "Ye powers! was Damon then so blest
> To fall to charming Delia's share?"

Some of the most acceptable have been those which hit off a mean between poetical English and broad Scots. But he is in his most characteristic and felicitous lyrical vein when writing in the Doric. The success of *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray* (with which it is interesting to compare *Genty Tibby and Sonsy Nelly*—a different treatment of the same theme), of *This*

[1] Preface to the *Evergreen*. It may be convenient here to enumerate the principal collections of Scots songs and ballads posterior in date to Ramsay's. 1. W. Thomson, *Orpheus Caledonius*, London, 1725, 2nd ed. 1733 (pilfered in great part from Ramsay). 2. David Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, Edin., 1769, 2nd ed. 1776, rep. Glasgow, 1869. 3. Hailes, *Ancient Scottish Poems*, Edin., 1770. 4. John Pinkerton, *Select Scottish Ballads*, 2 vols., 1783; *Scottish Poems*, 1792. 5. Johnson, *Musical Museum*, Edin., 1787–1803, ed. Stenhouse, 1839, and Laing, 1853. 6. Thomson, *Original Scottish Airs*, Edin., 1793–1818. 7. Ritson, *Scottish Songs*, 2 vols., 1794. 8. Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 3 vols., Kelso, 1802–3; ed. Henderson, 4 vols., Edin., 1902. 9. Jamieson, *Popular Ballads and Songs*, 2 vols., Edin., 1806. 10. Motherwell, *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, Glasgow, 1827. 11. Aytoun, *The Ballads of Scotland*, 2 vols., Edin., 1858. 12. Logan, *A Pedlar's Pack of Ballads and Songs*, Edin., 1859. 13. Professor Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols., Boston, U.S.A., 1882–1898.

is no my ain house, of *The Lass of Patie's Mill*, and of *For the sake of somebody* is not surprising or undeserved. As a favourable illustration of his capabilities, I submit three stanzas of *The Young Laird and Edinburgh Katy*, merely premising that here, as in the rest of Ramsay's lyrical triumphs, it is impossible to state precisely how much is his and how much the work of some *vates ignotus*.

"Now wat ye wha I met yestreen,
Coming down the street, my jo?
My mistress, in her tartan screen,
Fou' bonny, braw, and sweet, my jo.
My dear (quoth I) thanks to the night,
That never wished a lover ill,
Since ye're out of your mother's sight,
Let's tak' a walk up to the hill.

O Katy! Wiltu gang wi' me,
And leave the dinsome town a while?
The blossom's sprouting frae the tree,
And a' the simmer's gaun to smile;
The mavis, nightingale, and lark,
The bleating lambs and whistling hind,
In ilka dale, green, shaw, and park,
Will nourish health and glad ye'r mind.

Soon as the clear goodman of day
Does bend his morning draught of dew,
We'll gae to some burnside and play
And gather flowers to busk ye'r brow;
We'll pu' the daisies on the green,
The luckan gowans frae the bog;
Between hands now and then we'll lean,
And sport upo' the velvet fog."

There is here true, if not very profound, feeling; and we are conscious of the presence of that simple, yet resolute, determination to extract from life every drop of pleasure it can afford which is so persistent a note in Scottish poetry, and which Ramsay himself so frankly inculcates in the following lines:—

"Be sure ye dinna quit the grip
Of ilka joy, when ye are young;
Before auld age your vitals nip,
And lay ye twa fold o'er a rung."

It is the philosophy of Burns, except in his hours of remorse.

The volume of Allan Ramsay's original poetry,[1] apart from song-writing, is considerable, and we may say of him, as he says of John Cowper, that

"He was right nacky in his way,
And eydent baith be night and day."

His English poems, which include a number of so-called odes and elegies, are of little interest and significance, when they are not positively bad. *Health* and *The Morning Interview*, both in rhymed heroics, are the result of injudicious "emulation" of Pope, and little instruction or amusement can be derived from *Tartana; or the Plaid*, in which he implores the Caledonian beauties "who have long been both the muse and subject of [his] song," to assist their bard,

"who, in harmonious lays
Designs the glory of your plaid to raise."

Much better are his *Fables* (1722–30), in Scots octosyllabics, though he never attains the freedom and lightness of touch that distinguish the

"Dear lad, wha linkan o'er the lee,
Sang Blowsalind and Bowzybee."[2]

In the "familiar epistles" which passed between him and

[1] There is no really good modern edition of Ramsay, the best and most convenient being, perhaps, that in 3 vols. (London: 1851), which contains the Memoir by Chalmers and the Essay by Lord Woodhouselee. There is a reprint in 2 vols., Paisley, 1877.

[2] *To Mr. Gay.*

Hamilton of Gilbertfield in the *Habbie Simson* metre he not only gives his talents fairer play, but provides a model of which Burns was not slow to avail himself to admirable purpose. Two poems of heavier calibre and more ambitious design would of themselves have marked out Ramsay from the general run of Scottish "bards." The brace of cantos which he added to *Christis Kirk on the Green* (1716) are characteristic of one aspect of the age and of the race—grimy, squalid, and coarse; full of what is known as "realism," but lacking that touch of genius which a Burns might have supplied, and in whose absence the spirit of gaiety has evaporated, and mirth has sunk into gross and unredeemed buffoonery. *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725), which has generally been regarded as Ramsay's masterpiece, is much pleasanter reading than the *Christis Kirk* cantos, though it is difficult to classify. The work is, in truth, a curious blend of the mock-pastoral of Gay with the realistic-pastoral, if we may call it so, of Crabbe. Anomalous though the species be, the experiment is in the main successful. The mild burlesque of the conventional idyll with its Damons and Phyllises that runs through the poem mingles very happily with the pictures of Scottish peasant life, which, if some of its harsher features have been eliminated from the representation, is depicted with faithfulness and sympathy.

But to many judges it must always seem that the very cream of Ramsay's work is to be found in his vernacular pieces, on some topic of purely local or personal interest, which the genius of the author has so handled as to raise it out of the parochial and particular into the region of the artistic and universal. When treating such themes Ramsay's metre is that of *Habbie Simson*, except in the cases in which he employs that of *The Cherry and the Slae*. But he handles both with equal firmness and dexterity. Here are a couple of stanzas from *The Poet's Wish*, in which stands revealed a "gausie" shopkeeping Scots Horace, but a Horace, notwithstanding :—

"Whaever by his canny fate
Is master of a good estate,
That can ilk thing afford,
Let him enjoy't withouten care,
And with the wale of curious fare
Cover his ample board.
Much dawted by the gods is he
Wha to the Indian plain
Successfu' ploughs the wally sea,
And safe returns again,
With riches, that hitches
Him high aboon the rest
Of sma' fowk, and a' fowk,
That are with poortith prest.

For me, I can be well content
To eat my bannock on the bent,
And kitchen't wi' fresh air;
Of lang-kail I can make a feast,
And cantily haud up my crest,
And laugh at dishes rare.
Nought frae Apollo I demand,
But through a lengthened life,
My outer fabric firm may stand,
And saul clear without strife.
May he then, but gie then,
Those blessings for my skair;
I'll fairly and squarely
Quit a' and seek nae mair."

In the same measure are the humorous *Address to the Town Council of Edinburgh*, praying them to suppress the piracy of the author's works by the street ballad-vendors, and *The Vision*, a poem in a loftier strain, which he in vain endeavoured to palm off as a genuine antique in the *Evergreen*.

In the less complicated and shorter stanza to which I have referred we have a quartette of *Elegies;* on *Maggy Johnstoun*, who kept an alehouse at Bruntsfield links, on *Lucky Wood*, who kept a tavern in the Canongate, on *Patie Birnie*, "the famous fiddler of Kinghorn," and on *John Cowper*, the Kirk-Treasurer's man (as who should say, the

Proctor's bulldog), to whom were entrusted the duties of *agent de mœurs* in Edinburgh. All of these, in their way, are little masterpieces, and nothing could surpass in their own department the glimpses of "low life" which they afford, or the mordant and sardonic flavouring which is so skilfully thrown in from time to time, and in which *John Cowper* pre-eminently excels. Unfortunately, quotation from that particular elegy is practically impossible, and we must content ourselves with a fragment from *Maggy Johnstoun* :—

"When we were wearied at the gowff
Then Maggy Johnstoun's was our howff ;
Now a' our gamesters may sit dowff,
Wi' hearts like lead ;
Death wi' his rung rax'd her a yowff,
And sae she died.

Maun we be forced thy skill to tine,
For which we will right sair repine ?
Or hast thou left to bairns of thine
The pawky knack
Of brewing ale almaist like wine,
That gar'd us crack ?

Sae brawly did a pease-scon toast
Biz i' the queff, and flie the frost ;
There we got fou wi' little cost,
And muckle speed :
Now, wae worth death ! our sport's a' lost,
Since Maggy's dead."

In the *Last Speech of a Wretched Miser* the grimness of tone is strongly marked, though the piece cannot be ranked along with such a triumph of art as the scene of the elder Dumbiedykes' death in the *Heart of Midlothian*. The following verses, however, show power of no ordinary kind :—

"O gear ! I held ye lang thegither ;
For you I starved my guid auld mither,
And to Virginia sauld my brither,
And crush'd my wife ;
But now I'm gawn, I kenna whither,
To leave my life !

My life ! my god ! my spirit yearns,
Not on my kindred, wife, or bairns,—
Sic are but very laigh concerns
Compar'd with thee ;
When now this mortal rottle warns
Me I maun die.

It to my heart gaes like a gun,
To see my kin, and graceless son,
Like rooks, already are begun
To thumb my gear,
And cash that hasna seen the sun
This fifty year."

These must suffice, for we shall have to be satisfied with the mere mention of *Lucky Spence's Last Advice*, which marks the high-tide of Allan Ramsay's genius. The old Scots world of license, which the Church so zealously sought to crush, and in reality helped to sustain, by its too rigorous discipline, is nowhere mirrored with so punctual a fidelity to fact as in this sordid and gloomy, but wonderful, essay in dramatic satire.

Ramsay's attitude to life is essentially that of the prosperous Scots merchant with a strong taste for letters. His love of good fare and good drink does not quench his liking for the pleasures of the mind, and, though for the most part he leaves delicacy and refinement of feeling to others, his sense of humour is strong, he is no foolish optimist, and his view of what he sees around him is essentially that of a sane and healthy man. In his hostility to the puritanical faction in the Church—an hostility always implicit, and at times surprisingly frank in expression—he never varies, and, as in his deviations from the straight and narrow path of conduct he wandered less far than Burns, the less his need to indulge in short-lived paroxysms of repentance. We may regard him in his character as a type of the pleasure-loving Scot, who knows how to keep within bounds, and in his art as a poet who reached a high level of eminence himself, and served the

literature of his country even better by preparing the waste places for the approaching arrival of a master.

The anti-ecclesiastical bias, of which Ramsay had no monopoly, comes out strongly in a *Collection of Scots Poems*,[1] bearing to be by "the late Mr. Alexander Pennecuik and others." Of Pennecuik we know little more than that he was a contemporary and rival of Ramsay's, and that he died in 1730. *Rome's Legacy to the Church of Scotland*, an avowed "satyr" on the stool of repentance in rhymed heroics, is intensely bitter in feeling, though it must yield in merit to the dialogue in the eternal *Habbie Simson* measure between the Kirk-treasurer and Meg. In the same metre we have a spirited *Elegy on Robert Forbes*, another John Cowper, two stanzas from which will show how closely the author clung to the established convention :—

"Limmers and lairds he'll nae mair chase,
Nae mair we'll see his pawky face
Keek thro' close-heads, to catch a brace
Of waping morts,
Play bogle-bo, a bonny chase
About the ports.
. . . .
We lov'd to see his Judas face
Repeating preachings, saying grace,
Unto the tune of Chevy Chase
Shaking his head ;
Wha will he get to fill his place ?
For now he's dead."

Pennecuik has also a tolerable sketch of a domestic interior on a winter's night, which describes how—

"My lucky dad, an honest Whig,
Was telling tales of Bothwell Brig ;
He could not miss to mind th' attempt
For he was sitting peeling hemp ;

[1] Edin., 1756 ; rep. Glasgow, 1787.

> My aunt, wha none dare say has no grace,
> Was reading on the *Pilgrim's Progress;*
> The meikle tasker, Davie Dallas,
> Was telling blads of William Wallace;
> My mother bade her second son say
> What he'd by heart of *Davie Lindsay*";[1]

and so forth: a passage not without interest as indicating the attachment of the Scottish lower orders, even when imbued with the covenanting tradition, to the literature of their country. But if *The Merry Wives of Musselburgh's Welcome to Meg Dickson* be really Pennecuik's, all that can be said is that for once his lips were touched by the genuine flame. As a specimen of the kind which we may call the burlesque-supernatural it has no equal in Scots verse between Dunbar's *Dance* and *Tam o' Shanter*, with the precise tone and spirit of which its own are identical. Burns's masterpiece has the great advantage of being written in a more rapid and flowing measure, and the execution of the two pieces cannot for one moment be compared. But the *Merry Wives* has caught the right note of boisterous mirth tempered with terror, and we can imagine that—

> "At night when souters leave their lingles,
> And bairns come laden hame with singles,
> And auld wives kindle up their ingles
> To last till ten"—

the poem was assured of an attentive and delighted audience. As for the poems of the other Alexander Pennecuik, of New Hall and Romanno (1652–1722),[2] they are of no great merit, and therefore by us are negligeable.

We must glance rapidly at the minor vernacular poets of

[1] From *Merry Tales for the long nights of winter*, an otherwise vulgar and worthless piece, in *Streams from Helicon*, Edin., 1721.

[2] *Works*, with memoir, Leith, 1815. See also *A Collection of curious Scots Poems*, Edin., 1762.

the century before passing on to Fergusson and Burns. Some of them were among the "ingenious young gentlemen" who assisted Allan Ramsay, and not the least notable of these, though he had ceased to be "young," was William Hamilton of Gilbertfield (1665?–1751), the author of *Willie was a Wanton Wag*, and of *The last dying words of Bonnie Heck*, which appeared originally in Watson, and was loudly applauded at a later date for its fluency and finish by Ramsay. I forbear to trouble the reader, who has already had a good deal of the *Habbie Simson* stanza and will shortly have more, with any extract from a poem which is of no great intrinsic excellence, but derives its chief importance from being a link in the order of succession in Scots poetry. Hamilton also deserved well of his country by publishing in 1722 an edition (though far from a good one) of Blind Harry's *Wallace*. His namesake, William Hamilton of Bangour (1704–54)[1] is best remembered, not by his *Contemplation, or the triumph of love*, but by his exquisite *Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride*. Robert Crawford (d. 1733) contributed to the *Tea-Table Miscellany* a well-known, but somewhat tame, lyric, *The Bush aboon Traquair*, and George Halket (d. 1756), the schoolmaster of Rathen in Aberdeenshire, is alleged by some to have been the author of the plaintive *Logie o' Buchan*. Another north-countryman, Alexander Geddes (1737–1802), who was a Roman Catholic priest with a marked tendency to scepticism, produced the Jacobite lyric of *Lewie Gordon*, and (probably) that monument of Aberdonian facetiousness, *The Wee Wifeikie*, besides reviving the tradition of macaronic verse. Like most Jacobite poetry, *Lewie Gordon* was composed when the hopes of the Pretender's party had been extinguished by the failure of the enterprise of '45. Practically the only piece of real value which is contemporary with that attempt is *Hey, Johnnie Cope*, a spirited song in the broadside manner by Adam Skirving (1719–1803), an East Lothian farmer.

[1] *Poems on several occasions*, 1749.

Here, as in other instances, it is fair to own that the words derive substantial assistance from an inimitable tune.

Of somewhat greater importance than most of those just mentioned was Alexander Ross (1699–1784), a native of Aberdeenshire, who for many years was parish schoolmaster of Lochlee, in the adjacent county of Forfar. It was predicted by one of Ross's admirers that—

> "ilka Mearns and Angus bairn
> Thy tales and songs by heart shall learn,"

and the prophecy was fulfilled—at least as regards *Helenore, or the Fortunate Shepherdess* (1778).[1] For many years this pastoral, the debt of which to Allan Ramsay is palpable enough, was a prime favourite in every cottage in the braes of Angus, under the name of "Lindy and Nory." In so far, however, as Ross's fame is national rather than provincial, it rests upon two or three of his songs, which have immense spirit and vigour. We subjoin a specimen from *The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow*, and from the better known *Woo'd an' Married an' A'*.

> "For now when I mind me I met Maggy Grim,
> This morning just at the beginning o't,
> She was never ca'd chancy, but canny and slim,
> And sae it has fared of my spinning o't.
> But if my new rock was anes cutted and dry
> I'll all Maggie's cann and her cantrips defy,
> And, but any sussie, the spinning I'll try,
> And ye shall all hear of the spinning o't.
>
> O, no' Tibby, her dother, tak' tent fat ye say,
> The never a rag we'll be seeking o't,
> Gin ye anes begin, ye'll tarveal's night and day
> Sae 'tis vain ony mair to be speaking o't.

[1] Ed. Longmuir, Edin., 1866. This edition also contains Ross's songs.

Since lammas I'm now gaing thirty and twa
And never a dud sark had I yet great or sma' ;
And what waur am I ? I'm as warm and as braw
As thrummy-tailed Meg that's a spinner o't." [1]

"The girse had na freedom of growing
As lang as she wasna awa',
Nor in the town could there be stowing
For wooers that wanted to ca'.
For drinking and dancing and brulyies,
And boxing and shaking of fa's,
The town was for ever in tulyies ;
But now the lassie's awa.

But had they but ken'd her as I did,
Their errand it wad hae been sma' ;
She neither kent spinning nor carding,
Nor brewing nor baking ava'.
But wooers ran a' mad upon her,
Because she was bonny and braw,
And sae I dread will be seen on her,
When she's by hand and awa'." [2]

The 1804 edition of Ross's poems also contains a poem by Francis Douglas, named *Rural Love*, in octosyllabic metre, and *The Farmer's Ha'*, by Dr. Charles Keith, an excellent transcript of one aspect of rural life, as the vivid picture of John the hired-man's return from the smithy testifies :—

"Of John's return spak ilka nook,
They aft gaed to the door to look,
For they were on the tenter-hook
For Smithy chat ;
And now, I trow, like printed book
He gies them that."

But scarce any of the minor versifiers had the race and "smeddum" of John Skinner (1721–1807), [3] a clergyman in

[1] The *Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow*. Ed. 1778, p. 151.
[2] *Woo'd an' Married an' A'* in *Helenore*, ed. 1866, p. 294.
[3] *Songs and Poems*, ed. Reid, Peterhead, 1859 ; *Life and Times*, by Walker, 1883.

orders of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who wrote an *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* (1788) in prose, and enlivened his family and neighbours by numerous productions in a lighter vein. His *Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn* has always enjoyed a high reputation, and as for *Tullochgorum*, of which a couple of verses are here given, has not Burns pronounced it to be "the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw"?

"O, Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And any sumph that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him.
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
Blythe and cheery, blythe and cheery,
Blythe and cheery we's be a'
And mak' a happy quorum.
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance till we be like to fa'
The reel of Tullochgorum.

There needs na' be sae great a phrase,
Wi dringing dull Italian lays,
I wadna gie our ain strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' 'em.
They're dowff and dowie at the best,
Dowff and dowie, dowff and dowie,
They're dowff and dowie at the best,
Wi a' their variorum.
They're dowff and dowie at the best,
Their allegros and all the rest,
They canna please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum."

Poetical composition, it should be added, was by no means confined to the male sex, and many women, from Earls' daughters to alehouse keepers, it is said, engaged in the pastime.[1] By far the most distinguished of our Scottish

[1] There appears, however, to be no solid ground for the ascription of *Ca' the yowes to the Knowes*, to Isabel Pagan, a tavern-keeper near Muirkirk.

Sapphos of the eighteenth century, Lady Wardlaw to wit, we have already mentioned. Her senior by twelve years, Lady Grizel Baillie (1665–1746), by birth a Hume of Marchmont, was responsible for the pathetic lyric, *Werena my heart licht I wad dee;* Jane Elliot (1727–1805), a daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto, produced one version of *The Flowers of the Forest* in 1756, and Mrs. Cockburn (1712?–94), Sir Walter Scott's kinswoman and friend, another, nine years later; while in the *Auld Robin Gray* of Lady Anne Barnard (1750–1825), a daughter of the Earl of Balcarres, we have what is probably the most popular (Burns's work apart) of the sentimental ditties with which Scots poetry abounds.[1] Joanna Baillie (1762–1851), who has been already mentioned in another connection, contributed to the common stock *The Weary Pund of Tow*, *Tam o' the Lin*, and *Saw ye Johnny Comin'*, all excellent, and distinguished by a strong sense of humour. Lastly, though we depart a little from strict chronological order, it may be convenient here to mention Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne (1766–1845)[2] one of the most prolific and successful of Scottish songstresses. To her we owe *The Land o' the Leal*, the precise locality of which territory has been the occasion of so much innocent and ludicrous misunderstanding to the Southron. She, too, claims the *Laird of Cockpen*, an essay in a very different strain, which it is almost impossible to overpraise, as well as *Caller Herrin'*, an extremely nimble and tripping piece of versification,

[1] Lady Anne and her sister muses followed the orthodox or Scottish mode of taking some rude, fragmentary, and not over-decent old Scots song or ballad, cleansing it of its impurities, making it coherent, arraying it in decent apparel, and rendering it fit for decent society. In some cases the result savoured of emasculation. In others, and perhaps the majority, the lyric was all the better for the process. The very last of these poetesses was probably Lady John Scott (1810–1900), a Spottiswoode by birth, who is believed to be responsible for the current version of *Annie Lauric.*

[2] *Life and Songs*, ed. Rogers, 1869. G. Henderson, *Lady Nairne and her Songs*, Paisley, 1900.

the tune of which has suggested many hideous variations to composers who make such undertakings their business. To Lady Nairne, also, belong *The Auld House*, *John Tod*, besides *Wha'll be King but Charlie?*, *Will ye no come back again?*, and many other lyrics in which belated loyalty to the house of Stuart found not unworthy or unpleasing, though at times unconvincing enough, expression. A verse or two from the last-named song may fitly conclude what we have to say on the lesser Scots poets of the age which extends, roughly speaking, from the manhood of Allan Ramsay to the death of Burns.

"Bonnie Charlie's now awa'
Safely owre the friendly main;
Mony a heart will break in twa,
Should he ne'er come back again.

Will ye no come back again?
Will ye no come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no come back again?

English bribes were a' in vain,
An' e'en tho' puirer we may be,
Siller canna buy the heart
That aye beats for thine and thee.

Will ye no, &c.

Sweet's the laverock's note and lang,
Lilting wildly up the glen;
But aye to me he sings ae sang—
Will ye no come back again?

Will ye no, &c."

The bards of Caledonia, to do them justice, have never been slow to discuss the origins of their art, or to acknowledge the extent of their obligations to their predecessors. Not one of the fraternity was more candid in this respect than Burns, who indicates his poetical models in the poem addressed *To William Simpson of Ochiltree* (1785). After naming Ramsay and

Gilbertfield he mentions "Fergusson, the writer chiel, a deathless name," and then devotes the following verse to the memory of that unfortunate victim of ill-health and hard living :—

> "O Fergusson! Thy glorious parts
> Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
> My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
> Ye En'brugh gentry!
> The tythe of what ye waste at cartes
> Wad stow'd his pantry."

Robert Fergusson (1750–54),[1] in truth, stands in the direct line of succession between Ramsay and Burns. Had he lived longer, it seems not extravagant to suppose that he might have accomplished something inferior only to the very best of what Burns has left us, and, short though his career was, we can at least say of him that he helped with Ramsay to furbish up and re-fashion the instrument with which Burns was to achieve such astonishing effects.

Fergusson's English verse, it need scarce be said, is poor and unimportant. In the vernacular his *métier* was the descriptive satire as practised by Ramsay, and if Fergusson's workmanship be a shade smoother and more finished than Allan's, they approach their themes in much the same spirit and from much the same point of view. We have the boisterous gaiety, from which true mirth seems sometimes to be absent, the sardonic laugh, the biting irony ; and though Fergusson made shipwreck of his life and Ramsay did not, it cannot be maintained without undue refinement that the habitual mood of the younger man as expressed in his work, is much, if at all, more reckless than that of the elder. In the case of one poem, however, our proposition must be qualified. *Braid Claith*, of which the theme may be summarised as "to him that hath," displays a

[1] *Works* (with a biographical sketch), Edin., 1807. There is a convenient little ed. of his *Scots Poems*, Edin., 1898.

temper to which the more cautious and prosperous Ramsay rarely if ever gives expression. Nor can we fail to notice that Fergusson nourishes a violent animosity against those representatives of law and order, the City Guard,[1] a feeling in which Ramsay does not appear to have participated.

The *Ode to the Gowdspink* is fresh and sincere : qualities none too common in an age when even in the vernacular the poet was apt to think himself bound to sing the praises of nature by rule and measure. But the *Gowdspink* and the *Farmer's Ingle* notwithstanding, Fergusson is essentially the poet of the town, and that town Edinburgh. *Leith Races*, *Caller Water*, *Hallowfair*, *The Daft Days*, the *Address to the Tron-Kirk Bell*, *The Mutual Complaint of the Plainstanes and Causeway*, and *Auld Reikie* are fundamentally urban.[2] They waft to our nostrils a whiff from the wynds and closes, a blast from the taverns and merry meetings, of an old, unsavoury, and battered but fascinating capital. Its whole life is described with some of Swift's ease and fluency (and some also of Swift's particularity in matters where detail is best avoided) in his *Auld Reikie*, of which the following lines may serve as a sample :—

> " Now Morn, wi' bonny purple smiles,
> Kisses the air-cock o' St. Giles ;
> Rakin their een, the servant lasses
> Early begin their lies and clashes.

---

[1] " And thou, great god of *Aquavitae !*
Wha sways the empire o' this city :—
Whan fou, we're sometimes capernoity :—
Be thou prepared
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The City Guard."
From *The Daft Days*, *Poems*, ed. 1807, p. 236.

[2] The *Elegy on John Hogg*, porter at St. Andrews University, is, of course, *Habbie Simson* once more ; but good *Habbie Simson*, beyond doubt.

Ilk tells her friend o' saddest distress,
That still she bruiks frae scoulin' mistress ;
And wi' her Jo in turnpike stair,
She'd rather snuff the stinkin' air,
As be subjected to her tongue,
Whan justly censured in the wrong.
. . . . .
Now stairhead critics, senseless fools !
Censure their aim and pride their rules,
In Luckenbooths, wi' glowrin' eye,
Their neebours' sma'est faults descry.
If ony loun shou'd dander there,
O' awkward gait and foreign air,
They trace his steps till they can tell
His pedigree as weel's himsel'.
When Phœbus blinks wi' warmer ray
And schools at noonday get the play,
Then bus'ness, weighty bus'ness comes ;
The trader glow'rs ; he doubts, he hums ;
The lawyers eke to cross repair,
Their wigs to shaw, and toss an air ;
While busy agent closely plies,
And a' his kittle cases tries." [1]

It would possibly be rash to predicate of any of Fergusson's poems that they might be mistaken for the work of Burns. Here and there are to be discovered flaws in the technique, otiose epithets, harsh inversions, tame expressions, from which Burns at his best is wholly free. But if any pieces of Fergusson's could pass for Burns's, they would be, perhaps, *Caller Water*, which was plainly the model of *Scotch Drink*, and *Hallowfair*, to which also the indebtedness of the younger poet is considerable. Here are three spirited stanzas from what, upon the whole, is Fergusson's most successful performance :—

" Here chapmen billies tak' their stand,
An' shaw their bonny wallies ;
Wow ! but they lie fu' gleg aff hand
To trick the silly fallows :

[1] From *Auld Reikie*. *Poems, ut sup.* p. 340.

Heh, sirs! what cairds and tinklers come,
And ne'er-do-weel horse-coupers,
And spae-wives, fenzying to be dumb,
Wi' a' siclike landloupers,
To thrive that day!

Here Sawney cries, frae Aberdeen,
'Come ye to me fa need;
The brawest shanks that e'er were seen
I'll sell ye cheap an' guid;
I wyt they are as protty hose
As come frae weyr or leem:
Here, tak a rug an' shaw's your pose;
Forseeth, my ain's but teem
And light this day.'

Ye wives, as ye gang through the fair,
O mak your bargains hooly!
O' a' thir wylie loons beware,
Or fegs! they will ye spiulzie.
For, fairn-year, Meg Thomson got,
Frae thir mischievous villains,
A scaw'd bit o' a penny note,
That lost a score o' shillins
To her that day." [1]

But it is time to clear the decks for action, and to lay ourselves alongside of perhaps the most interesting and certainly the most perilous of all the topics which Scottish literature suggests—the poetry of Burns.

Robert Burns [2] was born in 1759, at Alloway, near Ayr, to

[1] From *Hallowfair*. *Poems*, *ut sup.* p. 254.

[2] The bibliography of Burns is immense, and here we can but attempt to indicate the outstanding editions and monographs. By far the best edition of Burns's poetry—best as regards print, text, arrangement, apparatus criticus, commentary, everything—is that of W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson, known as the *Centenary* edition, 4 vols., Edin., 1896–97. This contains Mr. Henley's celebrated *Essay*. The best edition in one volume is probably that in the Globe series, ed. Smith, 1865. For the rest, those editions are least satisfactory in which poetry is mixed up with biography, correspondence, and comment, in one confusing and inextricable mass. Of selections there is no dearth. As good as a better is that with introduction by A. Lang, 1896. Of biographies,

William Burns, or Burness, a man of Kincardineshire origin, who was never rich in this world's gear, but was distinguished by an unusual measure of the uprightness and intelligence which have always been regarded as the most precious inheritance of the Scots peasantry. Originally a gardener by occupation, William Burness took the small farm of Mount Oliphant in 1766, whence he moved to Lochlie, in the parish of Tarbolton, in 1777. There he died in 1784, after a life of arduous and unremitting toil. Robert's education, as may be supposed, was punctually attended to, and his father was not slow to make those sacrifices on behalf of his family, the willingness to undergo which is the best proof of the value in which education is really held among any people. Robert supplemented the labours of his instructor by devouring every book he came across; and it seems by no means extravagant to conjecture that when he reached the period of adolescence he was a great deal better read (the ancient classics, perhaps,

the best is that by J. G. Lockhart, Edin., 1828; new ed. by Ingram, 1890. Lockhart puts the case for Burns as handsomely and as adroitly as it is possible to do. Principal Shairp's *Burns* (E.M.L.), 1879, is a good illustration of how Burns criticism ought *not* to be written. It is almost as wrong-headed and well-meaning as Hutton's *Scott* in the same series. Mr. Stevenson's essay on *Some Aspects of Robert Burns*, in his *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, October, 1879), supplies a salutary corrective. The hundredth anniversary of the bard's death produced an enormous crop of fugitive literature on the familiar subject, but nothing, so far as I am aware, of more than purely ephemeral interest or consequence, with the possible exception of a poem in the six-line stave, entitled *Robin Redivivus*, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, July, 1896. The opinions of the "common Burnsite" can generally be gleaned from a perusal of any Scots daily paper on the 26th of January in each recurring year. As for foreign books on Burns, consult *inter alia* Angellier, *Robert Burns*, 2 vols., Paris, 1893. The poems have been translated into French, German, Italian, and, it is believed, by an enterprising citizen of Boston, U.S.A., into "English." For further information consult the *Bibliography of Robert Burns*, Kilmarnock, 1881; the bibliography appended to a characteristic monograph by the late Mr. Blackie on Burns, 1888; and the supplementary bibliographies to be found in the Burns *Chronicle*, Kilmarnock, from 1892 onwards, otherwise a publication not very easy to take seriously.

apart) and a great deal better educated generally than Lord Byron at the same time of life.

He had naturally been bred to the plough, and an abortive attempt to set up as a flax-dresser at Irvine, in 1781, did not long withdraw him from the stilts. After his father's death, he entered with his brother Gilbert upon the tenancy of the farm of Mossgiel, in the parish of Mauchline. But the enterprise did not prosper greatly, and, moreover, in the course of a couple of years, Burns had, as the saying goes, made the countryside too hot to hold him by a series of notorious amours which we may be dispensed from even attempting to enumerate. He was on the point of sailing to the West Indies in 1786, when his steps were suddenly diverted from the quay at Greenock to the Scottish capital. At the end of July in that year there had issued from the press at Kilmarnock a small volume of *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, which had been received by the public, not only in the South-west of Scotland but also in Edinburgh, with enthusiastic approbation. Blind Dr. Blacklock had written of the work to Dr. Lawrie, the minister of Loudoun, in a strain of high commendation and encouragement. The sight of this letter at once altered the new poet's resolution, which, perhaps, had never been very staunch, and made Edinburgh his destination instead of Jamaica. He reached it on the 28th of November, 1786.

The story of Burns's season in the capital, of how he was welcomed by all that was most distinguished in rank, or literature, or fashion, of how Scott met him at Adam Ferguson's, of how he held high revel, not alas! with his peers, but with Crochallan Fencibles and the St. Andrew's Lodge of Freemasons—has been too often told to need repetition here. That Burns sustained the trying process of being "lionised" with much greater coolness and composure than most men in his circumstances would have been able to do, is a truism. He carried himself in the best company which Edinburgh had

to afford with a manly independence, and a natural good breeding, which none has ever ventured to impugn, and which was only qualified by the tendency unduly to assert his own dignity when he conceived himself in any way slighted.[1] But he had none of the devouring self-consciousness which was apt to betray Hogg into inexcusable familiarities, and even in the moments when his better self was practically effaced he would have been incapable of such an outrage as the pages in which the Shepherd sought to defame his departed friend and patron, Scott. From the Duchess of Gordon, from Robertson, from Blair, from Mackenzie, Burns received nothing but kindness. What demoralised him was, not their attention, but, the flattery of the fifth-rate people who were glad to bask in the countenance of "Caledonia's bard," and to get drunk in his company. In literature as on the turf, and indeed in most other walks of life, it is the hangers-on who are hateful, and who do the mischief; and the type of man who gave Burns an irresistible impetus down the primrose way is excellently represented by a ruffian like William Nicol. Close association with creatures of this description, and "superfluous banquetings" in their society, might well ruin a character less easy-going and less "formed for pleasure" than that of Burns. Meanwhile, he had furnished himself with a more or less handsome supply of money by means of a new edition of his poems, published in Edinburgh, by Creech, in 1787, with considerable additions. This edition was reproduced in London in the same year, and a still further enlarged edition was issued by Creech in 1793.

Of the Sylvander and Clarinda episode, which began upon Burns's return to Edinburgh, in December, 1787, the less said the better. The flirtation is one of the silliest and most affected in the whole record of such affairs, and, as Scott

[1] Scott, Review of Cromek's *Reliques, Misc. Prose Works.* vol. xvii. pp. 252, *et seq.* This brief review is, it need scarcely be said, one of the very best things ever written about Burns.

remarks with his plain good sense, the name of Sylvander is "sufficient of itself to damn a whole file of love-letters." [1] In the following spring Burns performed the most sensible act attributed to him in his dealings with women; that is to say, he married Jean Armour, who had already borne him several children, and who made him an excellent and loyal wife. In the same year (1788) he took the farm of Ellisland, in Dumfriesshire, and in 1789 his means of livelihood were increased by his appointment to the post of an exciseman. The farming speculation had to be abandoned in 1791, and the poet then moved with his wife and family into the town of Dumfries. His muse had not been idle since he left Edinburgh. He contributed largely to Johnson's *Musical Museum*, which began to appear in 1787, and indeed he became almost the editor of that collection. He also assisted George Thomson in compiling his *Original Scottish Airs* (1793–1818), declining absolutely to accept of any pecuniary gratification for his labours. Almost all his most characteristic lyrical work appeared in one or other of these publications. But his impaired constitution was unable long to withstand the trials to which life in Dumfries, with all that life involved, subjected it. Death put a final period to his sufferings and struggles in 1796.

Burns's personality was so masterful and striking that we cannot be surprised when we find that criticism of his life and criticism of his works have been intermingled in an unusually pernicious degree. Professed admirers of his compositions have thought it necessary to tone down incontrovertible facts, and even to play upon the greediness of the public for a soul-satisfying myth,[2] in order that the bard may be represented as a model member of the community. On the other hand, those who resent his attitude to the Calvinistic section of the Church, against which he waged bitter war, are disposed to

[1] *Misc. Prose Works, ut sup.*, p. 264.

[2] The Mary Campbell fable has been demolished once for all by Mr. Henley. But *Resurgam* is inscribed on the tombstone of all such tales.

ignore his very best performances, and, with minds fixed on *Thou lingering Star*, or *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, to breathe the pious wish, *O si sic omnia !* National partiality, moreover, has been a complicating element in Burns criticism to an extent incredible to those who are unacquainted with the collective vanity which animates the more impulsive section of the nation. There is reason to believe that much information about the poet, amassed by an indefatigable, though by no means discriminating, inquirer in a past generation, was withheld by him from the world for fear of incurring popular obloquy. It is a mere fact that Mr. Stevenson's *Essay* on Burns was rejected by the cautious editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* because it ran counter to Scottish tradition,[1] and the circumstance that the epithet which instinctively occurs to a commentator as applicable to that admirable sketch is "courageous," shows how deep a hold prejudice is believed to have taken of the critical sense of the public. Lastly, so long as Burns Clubs continue to exist for the purpose of mingling oratorical flourishes with what is politely called "conviviality," so long will there never be wanting a yearly supply of assiduous if unconscious efforts to darken counsel and to obscure the truth. Inasmuch as these highly popular institutions as yet exhibit no symptoms of decay, it seems incumbent upon the critic to endeavour as far as possible to divest himself of all prepossessions, national or otherwise, and to approach the consideration of the poet's character and works with an open mind.

First, then, and that briefly, of Burns's character. No man of sense, who realises that the life of all men must needs be a more or less faithful illustration of the confession, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, will be disposed to judge him with a rigorous severity. It is only the pedant, or the prig, or the sentimentalist, who will desiderate in Burns that uniform consistency of thought or feeling to which no human being was ever

[1] Balfour, *Life of Stevenson*, vol. i. p. 141.

privileged to attain, or who will attempt to draw out a reasoned and systematised scheme of his theological and ethical views. Like the vast majority of his fellow creatures, he was a being of impulse and of moods ; and none save the veriest greenhorn will be astonished to think that the *Epistle to John Rankine* proceeded from the same pen as the *Epistle to a Young Friend*, or will trouble to inquire whether the bard of the *Reply to a Trimming Epistle* or the bard of *Highland Mary* is "the true Burns." Both bards are the true Burns. That he possessed many generous and engaging qualities is as certain as that their virtue was seriously impaired by not a few obvious defects. It may be doubted, however, whether the legacy of his example has, upon the whole, been beneficial to the mass of his countrymen. A pessimist might be forgiven for holding that he has confirmed them in some of their darling vices. Too often have his shortcomings been pleaded, expressly or by implication, as a justification for those of men who were never exposed to one tenth part of his temptations !

But the cardinal flaw in his character was unquestionably his want of chivalrous feeling where women are concerned. To impute this to his being a peasant is to give an explanation neither flattering to the Scottish commonalty, nor, I venture to think, altogether satisfactory. That he could, in the exercise of his art, assume the tone and spirit of chivalry and romance to perfection, we have ample demonstration in such incomparable pieces as *Bonnie Lesley*, *Go fetch to me a pint o' wine*, and *It was a' for our Rightfu' King*. Yet in his letters he reveals a state of mind with regard to the relations of the sexes which to call ungentlemanly were, indeed, grotesque as well as inept, but for which the epithet "inhuman" would not be much too severe. He was, indeed, fated to supply in his own person a signal instance of that petrifaction of feeling which, himself has assured us, is the result of "tempting th' illicit rove." In other matters he is sincere, genuine, *bon enfant ;* here he is a consistent and incurable *poseur*. We waive a certain intolerable

and unquotable letter to Ainslie. We rest the proposition upon many passages in his correspondence in which the language is well within the bounds of decorum, but whose total effect is the very opposite of pleasant. Something, no doubt, must be allowed for the vicious taste of his age—the age of the dawning of romance—to which "sensibility" was all in all. The trail of Rousseau smeared many a page even in the country of David Hume. Nevertheless, Burns took up the fashion of the day with much too great a gusto to permit us to absolve him from complicity in its offence. He is almost hateful when he begins to talk in his knowing and jocose way about "a certain delicious passion" in which he had been "initiated" at the age of fifteen; and when his gallantry begins to find expression in doubtful French, he is unendurable. No; the spectacle of the "old hawk" "on the pounce," of the veteran "battering himself into a warm affection" for some luckless or worthless girl, is the reverse of agreeable; and referring the reader on this head to Mr. Stevenson's *Essay*, we gladly turn from the discussion of Burns's character to the discussion of his work.

The first and most essential point to bear in mind is one which has been mentioned already, but which can scarce be too strongly emphasised. It is, that Burns marks the close, not the beginning, of a dynasty of poets. He was, not the founder of a school, but, its most finished and its final product. In him the vernacular poetry of Scotland reached its highest consummation; through his instrumentality it ceased to be merely the poetry of a small and remote nation, and was elevated for a short space to the level of the great poetry of the world; and with his death (certain symptoms of posthumous vitality notwithstanding) it died. Burns himself, as has been remarked, was under no delusion as to the debt he owed to his literary ancestors, for Burns was never a "common Burnsite." While disclaiming "servile imitation" [1] he admits, in the preface

[1] How expert he could be in careful imitation for the sake of parody we

to the Kilmarnock edition, that he has "often had his eye" on Ramsay and Fergusson, "with a view to kindle at their flame." It is hardly an exaggeration to assert that of almost every one of his poetical pieces the form and mode of treatment can be directly traced, not merely to the general tone and convention of Scots poetry, but to a specific exemplar from the pen of some named or nameless predecessor.[1] That the same is emphatically true of his lyrics has been ascertained beyond all dubiety by the industry of Messrs. Henley and Henderson, largely through the aid of the Herd manuscripts.[2]

A model then, of some sort, Burns behoved to have; but all models were not equally propitious to the play of his genius. Of English models, except those of the broadside or the bacchanalian variety, he could make little or nothing, and this is especially true of English eighteenth-century models which exercised a peculiarly sinister influence on his muse. He handled the rhymed heroic, for example, with less freedom and success even than Ramsay, as the *Brigs of Ayr* and the *Epistle to Robert Graham of Fintry, Esq.*, testify. *The Cottar's Saturday Night* (designed, apparently, to show what Robert Aiken, Esq., "in a cottage would have been") never quite throws off

may conjecture from *The Five Carlins*, where the old-ballad manner is most happily reproduced.

[1] As thus: The *Epistles* to Lapraik, Smith, Rankine, and Simpson derive from the poetical correspondence between Ramsay and Gilbertfield; the *Elegies* on Poor Mailie, Tam Samson, and Matthew Henderson from *Habbie Simson; The Holy Fair, The Ordination*, and *Hallowe'en* from Fergusson's *Leith Races* and *Hallow Fair; The Twa Dogs* from Fergusson's *Plainstanes and Causeway*, which also suggested *The Brigs of Ayr; Holy Willie's Prayer* from Ramsay's *Lucky Spence* and *Miser;* and so forth. What is the *Jolly Beggars* but the very quintessence of all mumping and gangrel rhyming from *The Gaberlunzie Man*, and *Clout the Caldron*, and Beaumont and Fletcher downwards? For the Songs, see the notes in Henley and Henderson *passim*, especially vol. iii.

[2] I understand that a work based upon a searching examination of the literary remains of David Herd is being prepared by Dr. Hans Hecht of Balliol College, Oxford, and the University of Berlin.

the bondage of Shenstone, though in one or two passages the fetters are strained to bursting, and the piece bids fair to be first rate. Of the ostensibly English poems and songs, such as *Thou ling'ring Star*, or *Clarinda, Mistress of my Soul*, we can say no more than that the world might have dispensed with them only less easily than with such a stilted English lyric, masquerading in Scots of a sort, as *Scots wha ha'e*. Mr. Henley is probably not far out when he pronounces his most successful English performance to be *The gloomy night is gathering fast*. On the other hand, in *The Whistle* and more especially in portions of *The Jolly Beggars*, the poet displays a command of the rapid, uproarious, anapaestic measure, so popular in England, for which a dismal failure like *No Churchman am I* had scarcely prepared us.

The models which best served Burns's turn for poetry other than what is lyrical, were the old favourites of the Scots vernacular muse with their distinctive cadences and measures. We have the octave with three rhymes in *Mary Morison* and *The Lament*, though in the latter the vocabulary and idiom are English, or, at all events, not Scots, and the total effect is consequently something artificial. The easier octave with four rhymes is well exemplified in the *Address to the Unco Guid* and the *Epistle to a Young Friend*. We have the elaborate, ambitious, and spirited metre of *The Cherry and the Slae* in *The Epistle to Davie*, which is inferior to Ramsay's *Vision*, and (employed to infinitely better purpose) in some portions of the *recitativo* in *The Jolly Beggars*. We have the modernised form of the *Christis Kirk* stanza, with its characteristic "bob-wheel," in such admirable descriptive pieces as *The Holy Fair*, *The Ordination*, and *Hallowe'en*. We have fresh, fluent, and eminently vigorous octosyllabics in *The Twa Dogs*, *The Death and Dying Words of poor Mailie*, and *Tam o' Shanter*. And, lastly, we have the six-line stave with two rhymes, associated with *Habbie Simson*, which was unquestionably Burns's favourite measure. In this are composed most of his

Epistles to and elegies upon various personages —the *Address to the Deil*, *The Auld Farmer's New Year morning Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie*, *To a Louse*, *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, the *Address to a Haggis*, *On the late Captain Grose's peregrinations through Scotland*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*—in short all the pieces, apart from the lyrics, *Tam o' Shanter*, and *The Jolly Beggars*, which would probably be selected by nine persons out of ten as most patently typical of Burns's achievement in poetry. As for the lyrics, their range and variety of rhythm and measure are limited only by those of the airs to which they had to be accommodated.

There is scarce an emotion adapted for expression in lyrical poetry which is not represented somewhere or other among the songs of Burns. He showered his compositions as the fancy took him upon his correspondents—upon Mrs. Dunlop, upon Johnson, upon Thomson, as the case might be—with all the unconsciousness of their comparative merits which sometimes characterises prolific genius. Now, his contribution would be some frigid poem in the classical vein, without a hint of the "lyrical cry;" now it would be some exquisite and flawless gem, compact in the crucible of his brain from the fragments of some half-forgotten, and not over-decent, traditional stave. Thus it is that, even if we lay aside so much of his work as may be set down for best and second-best, contenting ourselves with the *very* best only, the volume of his lyrical production is as remarkable in bulk as it is extensive in scope. If we attempt a rough classification of the moods which here find utterance, we shall find that there are the two Burnses: Burns *qui pleure*, and Burns *qui rit*, though perhaps the one is never far apart from the other. The unaffected, yet artful, tenderness of lyrics like *Ye Banks and Braes*, and *My Luve is like a red, red rose*, can never fail to captivate; the noble melancholy of *Go fetch to me a pint of wine*, or *It was a' for our rightfu' King;* must needs ever "echo in the heart and be present in the memory."

"Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain,
My Love and Native Land fareweel
For I maun cross the main,
My dear—
For I maun cross the main.

He turned him right and round about
Upon the Irish shore,
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear—
Adieu for evermore." [1]

What "amatory lay" was ever more graceful and melodious than *Mary Morison*—so manifestly the superior of her Highland namesake whether in earth or heaven?

"Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw;
Tho' this was fair and that was braw,
An' yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd and said amang them a':—
Ye are na Mary Morison!"

Of what is deservedly the most famous of Burns's lyrics there is little to be said.

"Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

The world of those competent to form an opinion has long been unanimous in ranking this "superb groan" of despair

[1] And this masterpiece is a vamp from *Unkind Parents* and *Malley Stewart*, two chap-book ballads! See Henley and Henderson, iii. p. 433. Scott availed himself of it, unconsciously, no doubt, in *Rokeby*. Every one will remember the admirable use to which Thackeray puts it in *The Newcomes*.

with the choicest work of Catullus. Yet it may be allowable to refer to it, *par parenthèse*, as a complete refutation of the idea that the success of a poet's exertions depends in any way upon the degree in which he himself at the moment of composition experiences the emotions to which he gives voice. If ever any snatch of song was informed with "sincerity," in the technical sense of the word, it is *Ae fond kiss and then we sever*. If ever any love affair bore all the marks of insincerity and affectation on both sides, it is Burns's flirtation with Mrs. M'Lehose, the close of which inspired those verses as surely as its inception inspired the sixteen lines of ineptitude which we know as *Clarinda, mistress of my soul*. Truly, the wind of genius bloweth where it listeth, and whether, to use a phrase of Burns's, the "bosom" of the bard is "strongly interested" or not in what he writes about, appears to make uncommonly little difference in the ultimate result.

It is not, however, one may trust, presumptuous to indicate a preference for the Burns *qui rit* before his more gloomy brother, or to find an even higher intensity of genius in the lyrics in which life is viewed in a more cheerful and less despondent aspect. William Nicol was, as we have said, a detestable fellow, but assuredly *Willie brewed a peck of maut* is the prince of all drinking songs of its type.

"It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinking in the lift sae hie:
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

Chorus:

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley-bree!"

The frame of mind in which a man may justly be said to be—

"glorious,
O'er all the ills of life victorious,"

has never been depicted with such inimitable precision and spirit. Many and beautiful, if sometimes a little artificial and exotic, are the songs which the collapse of the Jacobite movement called into being; but not one is there more manly, more redolent of the Borders, than *Kenmure's on and awa'*.

"Here's him that's far awa', Willie,
Here's him that's far awa'!
And here's the flower that I lo'e best—
The rose that's like the snaw!"

Yet it is, perhaps, when we approach what he might have called a more tender theme that the bard excels himself; nor should we quarrel with any one who chose to maintain that his most glorious triumphs in the field of lyric verse are—not *My Nanie, O* (infinitely superior as it is to Ramsay's version with its abominable "bagnio"), nor yet *Bonnie Lesley*, which it is difficult to praise too highly, but—*Corn Rigs* and (in a somewhat different vein) *Green grow the rashes, O*. Here is the whole of the latter, "faked" from Heaven alone knows what fragments of ancient sculduddery:—

Chorus:

"Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.

I.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O?

II.

The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O:
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

III.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O,
An' war'ly cares an' war'ly men
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O.

IV.

For you sae douce ye sneer at this ;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O ;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

V.

Auld nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O ;
Her 'prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O."

And here is the last stanza of *Corn Rigs* :—

"I hae been blythe with comrades dear ;
I hae been merry drinking ;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear ;
I hae been happy thinking.
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly—
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonnie ;
I'll ne'er forget that happy night
Amang the rigs wi' Annie."

In both these songs—and both, it must be remembered, were the work of years prior to the visit to Edinburgh and the *Musical Museum*—we have Burns, the Scots peasant, and Burns, the inspired song-writer, in their most characteristic moments : humour, playfulness, high spirits in the one, passion *plus* the infinite capacity for pleasure in the other, and consummate art in both, combining to produce a whole, the

precise equivalent of which no other country in the world can show.

For vivid narrative, for graphic description, for insight into character, for the power of judging men at a glance, for wide sympathy and deep penetration, the intense concentration of the lyric affords little or no scope.[1] For these and the like excellences we must turn to Burns's other poems, nor shall we turn in vain. Occasionally, no doubt, he displays a weakness for what may be called petty pathos—the *Mouse* and the *Daisy* are two instances of the failing, and they have, of course, entranced the hearts of that less intelligent section of Burns *amateurs*, who would be much shocked to hear that neither of these exercises can for one moment compare with the *Louse*. But the true test for the *Mouse* and the *Daisy* is some piece like the *Death of Poor Mailie;* or the *Elegy* on that most celebrated of ewes; or, perhaps best of all, the *Auld Farmer to his Auld Mare*. Every one of these three pieces is wholly delightful: instinct with humour, with kindliness, with humanity. But the *Mouse* and the *Daisy* in comparison are instinct with nothing save a feeble and even sickly sentimentality. The *Salutation* expresses what thousands of men must have felt in a vague way on such an occasion as that postulated, but what they could never have given articulate expression to even in the most shambling prose. It is a striking example of the particular raised to the universal—of familiar things made new. But neither the *Mouse* nor the *Daisy* expresses what any ploughman ever felt, nor even what Burns ever felt. All that *they* express is what a ploughman might have desired to feel, if, living in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, he had aspired to live up to the character of a poet. And consequently they need trouble us no longer,

[1] *The Jolly Beggars*, it is true, where many such qualities are to be met with in ample profusion, is to a great extent lyrical in form. But it is really lyrical *drama*, a very different affair from the pure lyric. Similarly the second set of *Duncan Gray* is what may be called lyrical narrative.

having served their turn as convenient foils for setting off the beauties of better poems than themselves.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him—what I winna name—
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like other menseless, graceless brutes.

An' niest my yowie, silly thing;
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up,
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop;
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

An' now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
I lea'e a blessin' wi you baith:
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kind to ane anither." [1]

"I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel' wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence
Thro' thievish greed.
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence,
Sin Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her livin' image in her yowe
Comes bleatin' till him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearlies rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorlan tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae 'yont the Tweed;
A bonnier fleesh ne'er crossed the clips
Than Mailie's dead.

[1] From *The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie.*

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—a rape!
It makes guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead." [1]

In the epigram Burns is almost invariably trivial and ineffective. In satire, on the other hand, when he "lets himself go," he is terrible and overwhelming. His quarrel with the Kirk was a bitter one; but there is something more than ordinarily pungent and envenomed in *Holy Willie's Prayer*. Never, in all probability, has so tremendous an invective against Calvinism, or rather anti-nomianism, been launched by an enemy of that scheme of thought. Here are a few stanzas :—

"I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation.
I, wha deserv'd most just damnation
For broken laws
Sax thousand years ere my creation
Thro' Adam's cause!

When from my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me deep in hell,
To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail,
In burning lakes,
Whare damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chained to their stakes.

[1] From *Poor Mailie's Elegy*.

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock!"

Here is the teaching of David Hume brought down from the closet "into the street" with a vengeance! Yet perhaps Burns's animus against the ecclesiastical tyranny which still prevailed in the West of Scotland, is not less felicitous in expression when it finds vent in the species of sardonic raillery of which, in common with Ramsay and Fergusson, he possessed a fine gift. Descriptive satire is unquestionably a *genre* in which he excelled, as *The Holy Fair* and *The Ordination* bear witness, and the revolt against the theology of the high-flyers is no less thorough-going when it finds expression in the pleasant jocosity of the *Address to the Deil*, than when it appears stripped of all disguise in the panoply of war. When the perturbing theological element is eliminated, his delineations of manners and his judgments on men are equally remarkable. *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, which is at bottom nothing but a fragment of parochial satire, is so transfigured by his genius that it has delighted thousands who neither knew nor cared that its victim was a certain John Wilson, schoolmaster of Tarbolton. *Hallowe'en* is a consummate picture of a state of society and of modes of thought and feeling which the "march of progress" has, it may be, rather smothered than destroyed; but probably Burns's wisest, as it is his most kindly, pronouncement on the life of the community around him is *The Twa Dogs*. In what excellent keeping is this sketch of the rural festivities incident to the New Year!—

"That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;

The luntin' pipe, and sneeshin' mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young anes rantin' through the house,
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them."

Place alongside of this the wonderfully accurate picture of the Scottish landed gentry of the time :—

"O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for every ane be better,
The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter!
For they frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows:
Except for breakin o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' of a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk."

Such a passage is worth a hundred of the full-dress denunciations of Luxury (with a capital L) in which Burns occasionally thought it his duty to indulge, or of those vehement assertions of the equality of the peasant and the laird, to which the progress of the French Revolution held out so tempting an inducement.

It remains to speak of what will probably be admitted to be Burns's two masterpieces, and in dealing with acknowledged masterpieces the critic's best policy is to be brief. *Tam o' Shanter* is perhaps the most popular of all the poet's writings, apart from those in the sentimental vein, and the preference awarded to it is not surprising. Even a very dull man can hardly escape taking some of its good points, and though we may question whether an Englishman is ever able to extract the very last drop of enjoyment from this, or from any other, piece in the Scots vernacular, its spirit and hilarity are so contagious that no one will surely refuse to be made merry. Subject it to the trying ordeal of being "spouted" by the

common village reciter (in whose repertory it always finds a prominent place), and it will emerge triumphant: unspoilt even by *his* resolute efforts to vulgarise and to mar. The drinking at the tavern, the ride home, the orgy in the church, the wild pursuit, the ultimate escape—each scene, each episode, is described with inexpressible vividness and enthusiasm; and each is so well proportioned and adjusted that the artist's supreme success lies in the piece as a whole as much as in any one of its constituent parts. For this reason it has been thought well to offer here no excerpt, not even the lines which lead up to Tam's imprudent exclamation of applause. Truly Francis Grose never did a better day's work than when he engaged Burns to write this "pretty tale," as he calls it, for his *Antiquities of Scotland* (1789–91).

The inherent force and overpowering spirit of *The Jolly Beggars* are perhaps sufficient to account for the inferior popularity of that "cantata" as compared with *Tam o' Shanter*. Had Burns swerved for one moment from the path of true craftsmanship, had he relaxed the severity of the artist and emitted the smallest whine of sentiment, had he dowered any one of his marvellous gallery of mendicants and mumpers with those virtues which draw the tear to the eye and the snuffle to the nose, *The Jolly Beggars* might have stood first in the hearts of its author's countrymen as securely as it does in the estimation of those best qualified to form an opinion. But Burns was loyal to his artistic instincts, and consequently the rank and file of his adorers, while paying the usual quota of lip-service, are puzzled, and do not quite know what to make of a piece which Scott pronounced to be, "for humorous description and nice discrimination of character," "inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry."[1] The collection of lyrics, each assigned to an appropriate personage, is declared by the same high authority to be unparalleled in the English lan-

[1] *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xvii. p. 243.

guage. To expand or amplify such eulogy were impertinent. Yet we may call attention to the extraordinary *crescendo* movement of the little drama as one of its most striking characteristics. From a splendid start, it goes on getting better and better, and wilder and wilder, until at length it culminates in that astonishing finale which fairly takes the reader's breath away. Here, after all, it is impossible to help feeling, is the mood which Burns expresses more adequately, more completely than any other—the spirit of rebellion against "law, order, discipline," the reckless self-assertion of the natural man who would fain, if he could, be a law unto himself, that violent revolt against the trammels and conventions of society, which may indeed win a temporary success, but is sure in the long run to be extinguished by the indomitable fact that man is a "social" animal. It is this mood that underlies the spirited piece of inverted snobbery, known as *A man's a man for a' that;* it is this mood that animates *M'Pherson's Farewell*, with its glorious refrain—

> "Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
> Sae dauntingly gaed he,
> He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round
> Beneath the gallows-tree";

it is this mood that breaks out with a cry of fierce defiance in that marvellous glorification of illicit love :—

> "O, wha my babie-clouts will buy?
> O, wha will tent me when I cry?
> Wha will kiss me where I lie?—
> The rantin dog, the daddie o't!
>
> O, wha will own he did the faut?
> O, wha will buy the groanin maut?
> O, wha will tell me how to ca't?
> The rantin dog, the daddie o't!"

Finally, it is this mood that finds its crowning and eternal

triumph of expression in the conclusion of *The Jolly Beggars* :—

"So sung the Bard, and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echoed from each mouth !
They toom'd their pocks, they pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to coor their fuds,
To quench their lowin drouth.
Then owre again the jovial thrang
The Poet did request
To lowse his pack, an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best :
He rising, rejoicing
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus—

Air.

I.

See the smoking bowl before us !
Mark our jovial, ragged ring !
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing :

Chorus.

A fig for those by law protected !
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest !

II.

What is title, what is treasure,
What is reputation's care ?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where.

III.

With the ready trick and fable
Round we wander all the day.
And at night in barn or stable
Hug our doxies on the hay.

IV.

Does the train-attended carriage
Thro' the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?

V.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them prate about decorum
Who have character to lose.

VI.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all, cry out, Amen!

Chorus.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!" [1]

Such, then, is the work of Burns, after whose death, as has been already remarked, the vernacular muse of Scotland may also be said to have fallen into a decline. Robert Tannahill [2] (1774–1810), it is true, whose local reputation has always outrun his deserts, wrote some tolerable songs, like *Jessie the Flower of Dunblane;* Scott turned out a few poetical pieces of rare merit in the Scots tongue; Hogg, as we shall see, had his periods of inspiration; and one or two writers, of whom Bozzy's son, the ill-fated Sir Alexander Boswell [3] (1775–1822) may serve for an example, occasionally worked the traditional

[1] From *The Jolly Beggars.* [2] *Poems and Songs*, 1815.

[3] His *Songs, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, Edin., 1803, is a thin octavo of 34 pages or so, containing, *inter alia*, that truly admirable specimen of Scots pleasantry, *Jenny's Bawbee.* Sir Alexander was a man of great ability, and had a private printing-press of his own at Auchinleck.

humorous vein of Scottish song with happy results. But though vigorous attempts have been made to galvanise the muse into the semblance of life, it is plain to all with an eye to see or an ear to hear that she is as dead as dead can be ; and it seems a tolerably safe prophecy to predict that no fruit worth the trouble of picking and preserving will now ever be yielded by the fertile and long-lived national tradition of poetry which was summed up and perfected in Robert Burns.

APPENDIX.

Though the matter does not concern us directly (for the works we are about to name had no influence upon Burns, and less perhaps in Scotland generally than anywhere else) it would be unpardonable to make no mention of what was undoubtedly *the* literary event of the third quarter of the century : the appearance in 1760 of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands,* to be followed in due course by an "Epic" in six books entitled *Fingal* (1762), and yet another epic, this time in eight books, entitled *Temora* (1763). These works professed to be translations of poems, in the Gaelic tongue, of immemorial antiquity, and the medium of their introduction to the public was one James Macpherson (1736-96) a native of Badenoch, who deserted schoolmastering for authorship, and realised a handsome fortune not only by his versions from the Gaelic but also by certain hackwork, such as a *History of Great Britain* (1775), for which alone he is said to have been paid £3,000. The *Fragments* and what followed them made an immense to-do in the world of letters. Home, Beattie, Blair, and, at the first, Hume (though he afterwards turned renegade) were enthusiastic admirers of those relics of a primitive people. Others, who were glad to have a fling at the Scots when occasion offered, denounced Macpherson as a forger and an impostor. The controversy raged hotly for many years, and it was not until some time after Macpherson's death that the facts in regard to these so-called Ossianic poems were ascertained in the elaborate report of the Highland Society (1805). The safe view appears to be that there was something to be said on both sides. Macpherson employed great freedom in his translations or adaptations, and nothing exactly corresponding to his English paraphrases ever existed in the original. On the other hand, there was undoubtedly a considerable fund of literary tradition among the Highlanders, and this formed

the groundwork of Macpherson's prose-poems. Macpherson was neither a very reliable nor a very respectable man, and the best judges (such as Campbell in his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*) are disposed to be severe on him. But it was probably worth while to brave the wrath of Johnson in life and the coldness of posterity after death in order to win the European success which at once became his. We may consider Macpherson's Ossian high-flown and pretentious nonsense if we please (and the present writer finds the stuff practically unreadable), but Macpherson was *pars magna* in the genesis of the romantic movement and in the "return to nature," though to compare him with Homer is flat blasphemy. Also, Macpherson was one of the first of the Celto-maniacs: the peculiar persons for whom all the good points in the British character, all the noblest achievements in British history, and all the glories of British literature, are the result of the Celtic strain in our blood. This contention is scarcely plausible, nor is it readily susceptible of proof. Yet it seems likely to get itself repeated at intervals until Doomsday. There is a convenient edition of *The Poems of Ossian*, ed. Sharp, Edin., 1896; and Mr. Bailey Saunders's *Life and Letters of James Macpherson* (1894) contains all the information about the singular creature that a reasonable man can desire to have.

CHAPTER VIII

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THERE are three names in Scottish letters, and only three, which, upon a survey of the literature of all countries and all ages, are unquestionably entitled to a place in the very front rank. The names are those of Hume, Burns, and Scott. With the two former we have dealt already. It remains to consider the third, who, if comparison between the three were aught but inept, would in the opinion of many of his countrymen stand first in achievement, as he indubitably does in character.

Walter Scott[1] was born on the 15th of August, 1771. His

[1] The sources of information about Scott, in addition to his works, his comments thereon, and his autobiographical fragment, are copious and satisfactory. There is, first and foremost, Lockhart's great *Life*, 7 vols., 1837–8, ed. abridged by Lockhart himself with some new matter, 2 vols., 1848. The edition referred to here is the complete ed. (1 vol., 1893). There is an excellent reprint in 10 vols., Edin., 1902–3. This has been supplemented of late years by the publication of the whole of Scott's *Journal*, ed. Douglas, 2 vols., Edin., 1890; and of two volumes of *Familiar Letters*, Edin., 1894, under the same admirable editorship. Of volumes of personal reminiscence, the best is the *Recollections* of R. P. Gillies, Edin., 1837; the worst and most offensive is Hogg's on Scott's *Domestic Manners and Private Life*, Glasg., 1834. Of essays, introductions and the like, there is abundance. One of the best is Mr. Bagehot's, in vol. ii. of his *Literary Studies*, 3 vols., 1895. Mr. Saintsbury's monograph (F.S.S.) may be commended. Not so Mr. Hutton's (E.M.L.).

father and namesake, a writer to the signet by profession, was of the Scotts of Harden ; his mother's maiden name was Rutherford ; and through both parents there flowed in his veins the blood of some of the oldest families on the Scottish border. A severe illness, which resulted in a permanent lameness of the right leg, was the cause of his being entrusted in early childhood to the care of his grandmother and aunt in Roxburghshire, and under their charge he may be said to have begun that unconscious process of "making himself," which he continued not only during his tours with his friend Robert Shortreed in Liddesdale, and his visits to old Invernahyle in the Highlands, but down to a much later period of his life. His formal education he received at the High School of Edinburgh (with the exception of six months at Kelso Grammar School, where he first met James Ballantyne), and he left that seminary with "a great quantity of general information," but, according to his own account, with little accurate scholarship.[1] He began to attend classes at the College of Edinburgh in 1783, and, after another spell of poor health, was apprenticed to his father in 1786. In this capacity, despite the "determined indolence" which he predicates of himself and his brothers, he was very far indeed from being idle. The precepts of Saunders Fairford were duly attended to, and the youthful apprentice earned enough by his copyings to keep himself in pocket-money. His leisure

[1] There are indications in the novels that he exaggerates when he asserts that he had forgotten the Greek alphabet, though Lockhart accepts the statement, and confirms it by an incident which happened in 1830—a date at which Scott's powers had certainly begun to fail. The frequency and aptness of his quotations from the Latin poets seem to prove that his acquaintance with them was more intimate than himself would have admitted, for the passages he quotes are by no means the hackneyed tags of the public men of the day. The truth is that the study of the ancient tongues was in a sufficiently parlous state in all Scottish schools until the opening of the new Academy in Edinburgh in 1824. Scott's speech on that important occasion may still be read with much profit (Lockhart *Life*, p. 525).

moments he devoted to that course of desultory and omnivorous reading which is in such marked contrast to the systematic plans of study by which less highly gifted men have painfully attained to one-fiftieth part of his information and knowledge. It was during this period, too, that he formed many of his most intimate friendships, and acquired that footing in general society which gave him a just confidence in his own powers.

Scott passed advocate on the 11th of July, 1792, and therefore a full month before attaining majority. His career at the bar, though by no means a complete failure, was not a triumphant success, and his marriage to Miss Carpenter in 1797 must have augmented the willingness to seek another string for his bow which had displayed itself in his published translation of Bürger's *Lenore* and the *Wild Huntsman* in the previous year. The affair of his earlier attachment to another lady has been handled by Lockhart with the most scrupulous delicacy and good taste; nor need we advert to it further than to note the characteristic effort of will by which he emancipated himself from the dominion of a hopeless passion, and the frequency with which his memory reverted to it in after life.[1]

The sheriffship of the county of Selkirk, to which he was appointed in 1799, set Scott free from any pressing anxiety with regard to his immediate circumstances. Six years later, he was made one of the principal clerks of Session, though he

[1] It can scarcely be doubted that the episode was present to his mind when such passages as the following were written: "Who is it that in his youth has felt a virtuous attachment, however romantic or however unfortunate, but can trace back to its influence much that his character may possess of what is honourable, dignified, and disinterested? If he recollects hours wasted in unavailing hope, or saddened by doubt and disappointment, he may also dwell on many which have been snatched from folly or libertinism, and dedicated to studies which might render him worthy of the object of his affection, or pave the way perhaps to that distinction necessary to raise him to an equality with her," &c., *Quarterly Review*, October, 1815, art. "*Emma*." Scott returns to the subject in a review of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, ibid., January, 1821, *apud fin*

drew none of the emoluments of that office until 1812. After that date he had a certain annual income of at least £1,600, depending upon literature for what additional sum his standard of living demanded. But he had abandoned the practice of his profession for the career of letters long before. The two first volumes of the *Border Minstrelsy* appeared in 1802, and the work was completed by a third volume in the succeeding year. His first great original poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, was published in 1805, and in the same eventful year Scott became a partner in the printing establishment which, at his instigation, James Ballantyne had transferred from Kelso to Edinburgh some time previously. From the appearance of the *Lay* Scott became the poet of the hour. *Marmion* (1808), and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) enhanced his popularity and reputation, and it was not until the publication of *Rokeby* in 1812—the year in which he bought the first portion of the estate he christened Abbotsford—that the enthusiasm of the public in any degree flagged. Poetry, indeed, had not monopolised the whole of his energies. An edition of Dryden (1808), and frequent articles, first in the *Edinburgh*, and subsequently in the *Quarterly Review*, testified to his industry as well as to his expertness in a certain class of prose literature. Financial engagements, however, contracted in the attempt to set up John Ballantyne and Co. as a rival to Constable in the publishing trade, became urgent. Byron showed signs of supplanting him in popular favour as a poet. The edition of Swift, which appeared in 1814, promised remuneration, handsome, indeed, but insufficient for his wants. Some new vein must be discovered and wrought to secure the needful "provision of the blunt." Accordingly, in 1814 he set to work upon an old manuscript which he had begun in 1805, and which, after having gone amissing for some years, had accidentally come to light. The result of his labours was *Waverley* (1814), which marks a new stage in his literary career, and which was followed with unparalleled rapidity

and steadiness by a series of novels of which the world has never seen the equal.[1]

Scott's fame and consequence went on increasing as surely as his territories and, apparently, his wealth. His house on Tweedside became the resort of all persons of distinction in both hemispheres, and of many who were neither distinguished nor entertaining, but whom his inveterate good nature would not suffer to be turned unceremoniously away. In 1820 he was created a Baronet, and in 1822 he officiated as the organiser and "stage manager," so to speak, of the King's visit to Edinburgh. When he went to London he was the "lion" of society; and whatever was greatest in the great world of affairs welcomed him with open arms. As yet he was not the acknowledged author of the "Scotch novels." The secret, it is true, was confided to upwards of twenty persons;[2] but none of these betrayed their trust, and, though few can have seriously doubted the authorship of the books, Sir Walter enjoyed the satisfaction of preserving his nominal incognito. It was not until February, 1827—a little more than twelvemonths after the crash—that the Magician formally laid aside a disguise which must already have ceased to mystify any one.[3]

[1] For a chronological list of Scott's principal works, see the Appendix to this chapter. [2] For a list of their names, see Lockhart, *Life*, p. 654.

[3] The following is one of the most characteristic of the motives assigned by Scott for a course which was innocent and natural enough in itself, and which I cannot agree with Lockhart in holding even partly responsible for his failure to look the facts of the printing business in the face: "The habits of self-importance which are acquired by authors are highly injurious to a well-regulated mind: for the cup of flattery, if it does not, like that of Circe, reduce men to the level of beasts, is sure, if eagerly drained, to bring the best and ablest down to that of fools. This risk was in some degree prevented by the mask which I wore; and my own stores of self-conceit were left to their natural course, without being enhanced by the partiality of friends or adulations of flattery." (General Preface (1829) to the *Waverley Novels*). No maniac, by the bye, has as yet broached the theory that the real author of the novels was Bacon in the guise of Hogg.

The crash had come in January, 1826, when the firm of Ballantyne failed (with liabilities amounting to £117,000), involved in the ruin of the publishing house of Constable, which itself had been dragged down by the failure of Hurst and Robinson. For the amount of this indebtedness Scott, a partner in the printing concern, was personally responsible, and, in the characteristic phrase of Lockhart, he regarded this obligation "with the feelings, not of a merchant, but of a gentleman." That is to say, instead of taking refuge in bankruptcy, he devoted the remainder of his existence to the attempt to pay his creditors in full. Few things in literature are more melancholy and harrowing, as few are more noble and inspiring, than the record of this gallant effort in the pages of his *Journal* and of Lockhart's biography. He died on the 21st September, 1832, a broken down and helpless man, before the goal was reached; but within that period of not more than six working years, he had earned by his pen, for behoof of his creditors, no less than £63,000; and his representatives were enabled to discharge the balance before very long through the spirit and enterprise of Mr. Robert Cadell, Constable's son-in-law and former partner. It would be superfluous to enter into the intricate and acrimonious controversy as to the precise proportion of blame to be attached to the members of the Ballantyne firm for its disaster. All are agreed that these were due to a vicious system of financial accommodation practised between the Ballantynes and Constable. Most people are now prepared to admit that Scott, who was certainly the "predominant partner" in the printing house, must bear the chief share of responsibility for its downfall. At the same time, had it been his lot to have a man like Blackwood or Cadell for his partner in the business, its finances might have been put upon a sound basis, and the crisis never have arrived which neither of the brothers, presented to us by Lockhart in such vivid colours, was the man to avert.

The character of Scott is a comparatively simple one, and,

thanks to his biographer and himself, we are able to form our estimate of it from ample information. To expatiate upon its manifest excellences is to tell a thrice-told tale. He possessed the manly qualities of honour, straightforwardness, and courage in a very high degree ; and they were mingled in his composition with an unusual strain of tenderness and amiability, such as won the particular devotion of men in every rank of society, of all young people and children, and even of domestic, or quasi-domestic, animals.[1] With regard to his "scheme of life," his aspirations, and his practical ideals, opinions will necessarily differ. "Highflyers" must needs view with distrust a man who practised so many virtues without canting about the eternal verities ; and "grovellers" (if we may use the term) who never practised a single virtue in their lives, may make Scott's career a justification for continuing in their course. The present writer is disposed to think that the utmost that can be urged against Sir Walter's failings has been frankly, yet affectionately, said by his biographer and son-in-law. He, at any rate, is not to moralise upon his "worldliness," his liking for kings and princes, and his preference for good society before bad. For, in the first place, whatever faults may be laid at his door were surely more than expiated by the gloomy tragedy of his closing years. And, in the second place, it is to those faults or foibles that we owe the Waverley novels. Men may be divided into two classes : those who try to spend a little less than they earn, and those who try to earn a little more than they spend. Scott belonged to the latter class, and that explains his embarking upon commercial ventures which he had better have left alone. Had he belonged to the former, perhaps James Ballantyne might have remained at Kelso ; but in all probability our literature had never been enriched with a *Guy Mannering*, an *Old Mortality*, or a *Redgauntlet*.

[1] Every one remembers the anecdote of the little black pig. (Lockhart, *Life*, p. 433.) For an impression of Scott from a frankly Whig point of view see *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, 1797–1830, London, 1898.

Among the hands who assisted Scott in the preparation of the *Minstrelsy* were James Hogg and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe (of whom more presently); William Laidlaw (1780–1845), who afterwards became Scott's intimate friend and amanuensis, and who wrote a poem in the vernacular, *Lucy's Flittin'*, which is not without merit, but which has been grossly overpraised; and, above all, John Leyden (1775–1811),[1] of whose extraordinary career Scott has given a graphic account in a Memoir contributed to the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1811.[2] The lines already quoted from the *Scenes of Infancy* (*supra*, p. 380) indicate clearly in what direction the current of Leyden's tastes set, and in truth no one was more deeply versed than he in the martial traditions as well as in the general folklore of the Border. He contributed to Matt. Lewis's collection of *Tales of Wonder*, and the assistance he rendered to Scott cannot (according to Scott) be exaggerated. Upon one occasion he walked fifty miles from Edinburgh and back again to obtain a fragment of a ballad from the mouth of some old person who knew it. His original contributions to the *Minstrelsy* are good, but not supremely good. *Lord Soulis* and *The Cout of Keilder* are perhaps the best known of his ballads. But every now and then there comes a verse which might almost have been written by Scott at his best: this, for example :—

> "In vain by land your arrows glide,
> In vain your falchions gleam;
> No spell can stay the living tide,
> Or charm the rushing stream."

As for the bulk of the *Minstrelsy*, it forms an anthology which, even in these days of scientific method, is little likely to be superseded. Scott, as has been indicated, did not stick at the conjectural restoration of a doubtful reading, or even at

[1] *Poetical Works*, ed. Brown, 1875. An excellent bibliography of Leyden will be found at the end of his *Tour in the Highlands*, ed. Sinton, 1903.

[2] *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. iv.

the amendment of what might be bettered. But, more fortunate than most editors, he touched nothing which he did not improve.

The story of Scott's taking seriously to poetry as a form of literary composition has been narrated by himself with inimitable candour and charm in his Introduction (1830) to the collected edition of his poetical works.[1] Though the *Minstrelsy* achieved but a moderate success, it had done no good to his practice at the bar; he had a wife and a growing family to provide for; and the time had now arrived when it was necessary for him to make a definite choice between literature and law. A congenial subject was suggested by the Countess of Dalkeith; his first attempts upon it were, after some deliberation, approved of by William Erskine and George Cranstoun; a suitable framework for the tale was devised at their suggestion; and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was the result. Written at the rate of a canto a week (for the irregular structure of the stanza readily permitted the "accommodation of a troublesome rhyme," or the adjustment of an incorrect measure) its success far surpassed the expectations of the author.

The model selected by Scott for the metre of the *Lay* was that supplied by Coleridge's *Christabel;* and he deliberately chose it in preference to the plain octosyllabic measure, not merely because of its superior variety, but because it held out less temptation to slovenliness. It will probably, however, be agreed that the best portions of the *Lay* are those in which the Minstrel appears, and these are all in octosyllabics. Dangerous as the facility of that metre is, Scott consistently avoided many of the pitfalls, while he availed himself of every legitimate device in the way of dexterous transposition of the rhymes to obviate the risk of monotony. It may be laid to his account that he taught every subsequent poet to employ

[1] *Poetical Works*, 6 vols., Edin., 1833, and since reprinted. There are innumerable editions in one volume, of which perhaps the most convenient is that in Messrs. Macmillan's Globe series, ed. Palgrave.

for serious purposes a measure for long associated (Barbour notwithstanding) with matters of a less heroic and more ludicrous cast ; but it cannot be said that he himself overdid it, and that the cadence of his verse ever palls upon the jaded ear.

If the inherent suitability of octosyllabics to lofty themes required demonstration, Scott has unquestionably afforded it. Almost all his "show" scenes are in that stanza—the battle in *Marmion* and the hero's departure from Tantallon, the meeting of Fitz-James and Rhoderick Dhu in *The Lady of the Lake*—all the passages, in short, which the youth of this country were wont to commit to memory, and, it is to be hoped, still do. Let us be thankful that they were not written in blank verse—though Scott's blank verse is more than tolerable, despite a plethora of double endings ; or in rhymed heroics—though *The Poacher* (1809) is almost as good as Crabbe at his best ; or in the Spenserian metre—though there are dignified and noble stanzas in *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811). Far be it from us even to seem to disparage the "epic" muse of Scott ; to discover with Hazlitt "something meretricious" (an astounding adjective !) in his ballad-rhymes ; to deny him an extraordinary share of strength and originality. But it is by no means certain that a higher and more subtle poetical quality does not belong to less strenuous passages in the octosyllabic measure than to those in which the reader is hurried along in the overwhelming rapidity and irresistible onrush of the narrative. Let us bear in mind, for example, such performances as the introductions to the several cantos of *Marmion*, particularly those addressed to Mr. Rose and Mr. Erskine, or as the following exquisite poem, supposed to have been composed by Waverley "on receiving intelligence of his commission as captain of a troop of horse in Colonel Gardiner's regiment."

> "Late, when the autumn evening fell
> On Mirkwood-Mere's romantic dell,
> The lake returned, in chasten'd gleam,
> The purple cloud, the golden beam :

Reflected in the crystal pool,
Headland and bank lay fair and cool;
The weather-tinted rock and tower,
Each drooping tree, each fairy flower,
So true, so soft, the mirror gave,
As if there lay beneath the wave
Secure from trouble, toil, and care,
A world than earthly world more fair.

But distant winds began to wake,
And roused the Genius of the Lake!
He heard the groaning of the oak,
And donned at once his sable cloak,
As warrior at the battle cry,
Invests him with his panoply:
Then as the whirlwind nearer press'd,
He 'gan to shake his foamy crest
O'er furrowed brow and blacken'd cheek,
And bade his surge in thunder speak.
In wild and broken eddies whirled,
Flitted that fond ideal world;
And to the shore in tumult tost,
The realms of fairy bliss were lost.

Yet with a stern delight and strange,
I saw the spirit-stirring change.
As warr'd the wind with wave and wood,
Upon the ruin'd tower I stood,
And felt my heart more strongly bound,
Responsive to the lofty sound,
While, joying in the mighty roar,
I mourn'd that tranquil scene no more.

So on the idle dreams of youth
Breaks the loud trumpet-call of truth,
Bids each fair vision pass away,
Like landscapes on the lake that lay,
As fair, as flitting, and as frail,
As that which fled the autumn gale—
For ever dead to fancy's eye
Be each gay form that glided by,
While dreams of love and lady's charms
Give place to honour and to arms."[1]

[1] From *Waverley*, ch. v.

In the last verse of this fine piece we catch the peculiar ring characteristic of Scott when his inspiration is at its highest.[1]

Contemporary criticism was disposed to place *Marmion* at the head of Sir Walter Scott's poems, with *The Lady of the Lake* second, and *The Lay* (a manifestly inferior work to either), or *Rokeby*, third. The opinion of subsequent generations has not perhaps been very different; and it would unquestionably be a hard task to show that the preference almost unanimously accorded to *Marmion* is not thoroughly deserved. Any doubts that may arise from the character of the hero, or the improbability of the plot, are swept away in the animated march of the story, culminating as it does in that famous sixth canto which has often been described as the most Homeric piece of writing since the *Iliad*. Without considering too curiously the felicity of the epithet—of which Jeffrey appears to have been the original author—we may at least esteem it fortunate that the day of Scotland's disaster should have found so noble and worthy a record. But when to *The Lady of the Lake* is awarded the second place, I am moved to protest, and to claim that distinction for *Rokeby*, a poem which provoked an extremely witty gibe from Tom Moore, but which, as honest Tom himself might have admitted, was not far short of the best that Scott could give. *The Lady of the Lake* has much in it that is charming, and much that, to the age which welcomed it, was novel. For us the novelty has evaporated; though much of the charm remains. There are beautiful and stirring passages which may not be heedlessly passed over. But in point of coherence, probability, and

[1] The same note is audible in four magnificent lines from the epistle to William Erskine prefixed to canto iii. of *Marmion*:—

> "Methought that still with trump and clang
> The gateway's broken arches rang;
> Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
> Glar'd through the windows' rusty bars."

directness of plot, *Rokeby* is superior to any one of Scot's poems; and while in none is the average level of achievement higher, it yields to *Marmion* only because it can boast of none of those glorious passages which at once became matter of common knowledge to the general public. I confess I should have little hesitation in staking Scott's fame as a writer of *long* poems upon *Rokeby* alone.

It is, indeed, primarily as a "narrative genius" that Scott's was for long regarded.[1] The rest of what he accomplished in verse was thrown into the background, first by the vogue of *Marmion* and its brethren, and subsequently by the still greater vogue of the Waverley novels. I can recollect no professional critic in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century who has honoured his fugitive and occasional poetry with adequate notice; and though its merit has probably been more generously recognised during the last five-and-twenty years, it has not yet had full justice done to it. With our minds concentrated upon this conception of Scott as *ante omnia* a "narrative genius," we have been too apt to lose sight of the ballad and lyrical verse scattered with such careless prodigality through the novels and the "epics." We ignore his amazing versatility as a poet: his turn for composing words to any tune, grave or gay, though he had no ear for melody. We forget that most apt and humorous of broadsides, *Carle, now the King's come* (1822); or the delightful lines to Lockhart (1824) "on the composition of Maida's epitaph," of which here are a few :—

> "So *stet pro ratione voluntas*—be tractile,
> Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
> If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse:
> To-morrow you'll see me in town for the winter-course,

[1] The phrase is G. L. Craik's in his *Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England*, 6 vols., 1844–45; in many ways a remarkably good book. It is significant that he treats of Scott wholly from this point of view.

But not at your door at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
Ergo—peace ! on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle.
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and dominie Grundys ;
A fig for dry thrapples, south, north, east, and west, sir,
Speates and raxes ere five for a famishing guest, sir ;
And as Fatsman and I have some topics for haver, he'll
Be invited, I hope, to meet me and Dame Peveril,
Upon whom, to say nothing of Oury and Anne, you a
Dog shall be deemed if you fasten your *Janua*."[1]

Or we forget *Donala Caird* (1818), from which I excerpt three stanzas :—

Chorus.

"Donald Caird's come again !
Donald Caird's come again !
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again !

Donald Caird can lilt and sing,
Blithely dance the Hieland fling,
Drink till the gudeman be blind,
Fleech till the gudewife be kind ;
Hoop a leglin, clout a pan,
Or crack a pow wi' ony man ;
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can wire a maukin,
Kens the wiles o' dun-deer stalkin',
Leisters kipper, makes a shift
To shoot a muir-fowl in the drift ;
Water-bailiffs, rangers, keepers,
He can wauk when they are sleepers ;
Not for bountith or reward
Dare ye mell wi' Donald Caird.

. . . .

[1] Lockhart, *Life*, ch. lx. ed. *cit.* p. 528.

Steek the aumrie, lock the kist,
Else some gear may weel be missed ;
Donald Caird finds orra things
Where Allan Gregor fand the tings ;
Dunts of kebbuck, taits o' woo',
Whiles a hen and whiles a sow,
Webs or duds frae hedge or yard—
'Ware the wuddie, Donald Caird !

Donald Caird's come again !
Donald Caird's come again !
Dinna let the Shirra ken
Donald Caird's come again !"

Or we forget even *Bonnie Dundee* (1825), those "few verses, written before dinner," to whose irresistible excellence Scott alone appears to have been insensible, and the authorship of which was at a later date to escape his memory.

If, then, we would exalt Scott to the highest rank in the hierarchy of poetry to which he may reasonably lay claim, the present writer's conviction is that in his incidental and miscellaneous verse will be found our best warrant for so doing. Beaten by Byron at his own game, as the world thought, he attained an elevation in some of his shorter pieces to which Byron could aspire as little as Erasmus Darwin. The emotion with which they throb is never other than sincere ; they are disfigured by no airs and graces ; and their language is so simple and direct, their music so brave and gallant, that they imprint themselves indelibly upon the memory. "Where shall the lover rest" is as good as most passages in *Marmion*, and the best thing in *Rokeby* (unless we except Scott's addition to the old ballad on which Burns also tried his hand) is the song of *Brignall Banks* :—

"O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.

And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily—

CHORUS.

'O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.'

'If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down!
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed
As blithe as Queen of May.'

'I read you by your bugle horn
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood.'
'A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night.'

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!'

'With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum.'
'I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

And O, though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

'Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die!
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.'"[1]

We would sacrifice much contemporary and subsequent versification for Cleveland's song, "Farewell, farewell, the voice you hear," for "Why sit'st thou by that ruined hall," for *County Guy;* nay, for a single verse such as—

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name;"

or as—

"Cauld is my bed, Lord Archibald,
And sad my sleep of sorrow;
But thine sall be as sad and cauld
My fause true love! to-morrow."

That Elspeth's ballad of Harlaw is as masterly an essay in that species of poetry as ever came from the lips or pen of ancient or modern minstrel, will scarcely be disputed.

[1] *Rokeby*, canto iii.

These observations on Scott's poetry may be concluded by citing two more specimens, each perfect in its way. The first is notable for the haunting quality of its cadences : the solemn and dignified rhythm lingers in the mind :—

"And you shall deal the funeral dole ;
Ay, deal it, mother mine,
To weary body and to heavy soul,
The white bread and the wine.

And you shall deal my horses of pride ;
Ay, deal them, mother mine ;
And you shall deal my lands so wide,
And deal my castles nine.

But deal not vengeance for the deed,
And deal not for the crime ;
The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
And the rest in God's own time." [1]

The second represents perhaps the highest flight of Scott's genius in poetry :—

"Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early ;
Sweet robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me ?'
'When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.'

'Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly ?'
'The grey-headed sexton,
That delves the grave duly.

The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady ;
The owl from the steeple sing,
"Welcome, proud lady."'" [2]

[1] From *The Pirate.*

[2] From *The Heart of Midlothian.*

Definitions of poetry may vary from age to age ; but none can be worth much which would exclude the note which is here sounded from ranking with all that is most truly poetical in the literature of the world.

The glory of the Waverley novels has thrown the other prose writings of Scott into the shade, yet there is enough in the twenty-eight volumes of his collected *Miscellaneous Prose Works* to have established the fame of any less illustrious author upon an absolutely sure foundation. It is not that he excels in the artful concatenation of words and phrases, though, as we shall have occasion to note, too much has been made of the "slovenliness" of his style. But there are a wisdom, a benignity, and a personal charm, about everything that came from his pen which more correct and accomplished writers have often failed to attain. His learning sits lightly on him, and is communicated with ease ; he is never under the necessity of "combining his knowledge," like the famous member of Mr. Pott's staff; and, in fine, though his sentences may be long and awkward, though his metaphors may be unduly elaborated, and though his diction may be ordinary and his vocabulary not *récherché*, the general effect is that which might have been produced by his conversation in real life. We know that it was the fashion among the "intellectual" section of Edinburgh society to despise it as commonplace, and that many clever young persons in particular professed to hold what Lockhart calls "that consolatory tenet of local mediocrity." Lord Cockburn's retort to one who avowed this view is sufficient and conclusive :—"I have the misfortune to think differently from you—in my humble opinion, Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his *genius*." [1]

In biography, history, and criticism Scott was equally excellent. His most important, or, rather, his longest, prose work is a combination of the two first kinds, and perhaps

[1] Lockhart, *Life*, ch. xl. p. 370.

its very magnitude has stood in the way of its adequate appreciation by posterity. An age which has no time to read the whole of Gibbon has no time to read the whole of the *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827), though the illiterate public of the day absorbed two editions of the nine volumes, and thereby contributed £18,000 towards the payment of the biographer's creditors. Scott was probably too near the events he chronicled to be an ideal historian of the Napoleonic era, but ideal historians are rare, and no one has since played the part in connection with the same subject. That the work was composed in haste is indeed true; Lockhart opines that its composition had occupied no more than twelve months.[1] But assuredly there was no economy of care in investigating facts, and, though there may be inaccuracy in details, in all the fundamentals there is complete trustworthiness. Above all, we recognise the fairness of judgment which always characterised Scott's excursions into history, and which aroused the wrath of partisans at either extremity of opinion. The following extract may serve to convey an idea of Scott's historical muse in her more lively and combative mood :—

"All this extraordinary energy was, in one word, the effect of TERROR. Death—a grave—are sounds which awaken the strongest efforts in those whom they menace. There was never anywhere, save in France during this melancholy period, so awful a comment on the expression of Scripture, 'All that a man hath he will give for his life.' Force, immediate and irresistible force, was the only logic used by the government—Death was the only appeal from their authority—the Guillotine the all-sufficing argument, which settled each debate betwixt them and the governed.

"Was the Exchequer low, the Guillotine filled it with the effects

[1] We may here note that the second and third volumes of *Waverley* were written in three weeks, and that the composition of *Guy Mannering*, undertaken by way of "refreshing the machine," occupied no more than six.

of the wealthy, who were judged aristocratical in exact proportion to the extent of their property. Were these supplies insufficient, diminished as they were by peculation ere they reached the public coffers, the assignats remained, which might be multiplied to any quantity. Did the paper medium of circulation fall in the market to fifty under the hundred, the Guillotine was ready to punish those who refused to exchange it at par. A few examples of such jobbers in the public funds made men glad to give one hundred francs for state money which they knew to be worth no more than fifty. Was bread awanting, corn was to be found by the same compendious means, and distributed among the Parisians, as among the ancient citizens of Rome, at a regulated price. The Guillotine was a key to storehouses, barns, and granaries.

"Did the army want recruits, the Guillotine was ready to exterminate all conscripts who should hesitate to march. On the generals of the Republican army, this decisive argument, which *a priori*, might have been deemed less applicable, in all its rigour, to them than to others, was possessed of the most exclusive authority. They were beheaded for want of success, which may seem less different from the common course of affairs ; but they were also guillotined when their successes were not improved to the full expectation of their masters. Nay, they were guillotined when, being too successful, they were suspected of having acquired over the soldiers who had conquered under them, an interest dangerous to those who had the command of this all-sufficing reason of state. Even mere mediocrity, and a limited but regular discharge of duty, neither so brilliant as to incur jealousy, nor so important as to draw down censure, was no protection. There was no rallying point against this universal, and very simple system—of main force.

"The Vendéans who tried the open and manly mode of generous and direct resistance, were, as we have seen, finally destroyed, leaving a name which will live for ages. The commercial towns, which, upon a scale more modified, also tried their strength with the revolutionary torrent, were successively overpowered. One can, therefore, be no more surprised that the rest of the nation gave way to predominant force than we are daily at seeing a herd of strong and able-bodied cattle driven to the shambles before one or two butchers, and as many bull-dogs. As the victims approach the slaughter-house, and smell the blood of those which have suffered the fate to which they are destined, they may be often observed to hesitate, start, roar, and bellow, and intimate their dread of the fatal spot, and instinctive desire to escape from it ; but the cudgels of their drivers, and the fangs of the mastiffs, seldom fail to compel

them forward, slavering, and snorting, and trembling, to the destiny which awaits them."[1]

In point of proportion and symmetry, however, the *Napoleon* is inferior to the comparatively short *Life of Dryden* prefixed to the edition of that poet's works published in 1808, and to the *Life of Swift*, prefixed to the edition of the Dean's works published in 1814, exactly six days before *Waverley*. Both of these are first-rate examples of literary biography; and, inasmuch as the career of both authors offers numerous topics of controversy, Scott's tact and breadth of view are peculiarly conspicuous. Perhaps he rises to his highest level as a critic in the admirable introductions which he furnished to Ballantyne's Novelists' Library (1821). Occasionally we come across a curious aberration of judgment, as in the well-known passage in which he places *Fathom* above *Jonathan Wild*; but these freaks are rare, and as a rule his criticism is at once sane and sagacious; free from the jargon of the professional reviewer, and free from the waywardness of personal prejudice; the offspring of a masterly intellect, a profound memory, and a generous spirit. What the *Quarterly* might have been without Scott at the beginning of its career it is painful to think.

We may not dwell on the learned *Essays* on *Chivalry* (1818), on the *Drama* (1819), and on *Romance* (1824), contributed, at Constable's earnest request, to the *Supplement* to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, nor can we afford to linger over *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1816), an essay, so to speak, in "special correspondence," which supplied Lockhart with the hint for a work in a very different vein. We may be permitted to say a little more of the *Tales of a Grandfather*, a work which was undertaken immediately upon the completion of the *Buonaparte*, and of which the first series appeared before the end of 1827. This is probably the best history for the use of children ever written. Scott strongly disapproved of writing *down to* the

[1] *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* in *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. ix. p. 190.

capacity of the young, and thus the *Tales* have not only succeeded in catching the ear of the class for which they were primarily intended, but have also fixed the attention of the grown-up reader. The Scottish *Tales*, indeed, are in some respects still our best history of Scotland. From no other work can so just a conception be derived of the mingled glory and squalor which make up our annals. The romance is brought into full prominence; the familiar and pregnant sayings, stripped of which Scottish history ceases to be Scottish history, are all there. But the reverse of the shield is not concealed from view; and the excesses of contending factions are impartially displayed and rebuked. Nowhere are Scott's coolness of reason and fairness of judgment more striking. How difficult it is, in discussing the history of Scotland, to avoid "taking sides," only a Scot can know. In the most heated and prolonged controversy of all, Sir Walter's predilections unmistakably led him in one direction. Perhaps he curbed them with unnecessary rigour, and went farther in the opposite course than it was absolutely necessary for candour and impartiality to go. Denounced by the apologists for the Covenanters in his own day,[1] he is eagerly cited by their more prudent successors in our own. The *Tales*, says Lockhart, are "equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom and the nursery."[2] We believe that they are now rarely to be found in the list of books prescribed for use in Scotch secondary schools. They are less suitable for the purpose of examinations than the compilations of some obscure hack, who can, moreover, infuse into his work the opinions believed to be acceptable to the average parent. This is a testimony to the

[1] Dr. M'Crie's articles on *Old Mortality* in the *Religious Instructor* (1817), provoked a reply from Scott in the *Quarterly*, but need not farther be adverted to. I am satisfied that every syllable put into the mouth of Mause Headrigg, or Gabriel Kettledrummle, or Habakkuk Mucklewrath, can be paralleled in the recorded utterances of savoury Mr. Alexander Peden or any other precious saint of the Covenant.

[2] *Life*, p. 674.

permanent value of the *Tales* as irrefragable as that afforded by the censures of the Prelatist fanatic on the one hand or the Presbyterian enthusiast on the other.

For the rest, the reader who desires a characteristic selection of Scott's prose-writings other than fiction cannot possibly do better than consult volumes xx. and xxi. of the *Miscellaneous Prose Writings*, in the contents of which he will find precisely what he wants. They comprise the *Quarterly* article on the Culloden papers (1816), with its concise yet spirited sketch of the Rebellion of 1745, and its excellent dissertation on the Highlands; the review of Pepys's Diary and of John Kemble's life, both from the *Quarterly* (1826), and the latter an exceptionally interesting and delightful paper; and the *Essay on Planting Waste Lands* (1827) and that *On Landscape Gardening* (1828), two of his most attractive contributions to the same periodical. Finally, there are the three *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*, addressed to the editor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (1826), and afterwards published in a pamphlet by Blackwood. Their immediate object was the preservation of the national £1 note, then menaced by the proposed currency measures of the government; their fundamental theme was a defence of Scottish institutions against rash and ill-considered innovations at the instance of English ministers. "If you *unscotch* us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen," was his warning to Croker;[1] and coming as it did from one the national, as opposed to the provincial, quality of whose patriotism was unimpeachable, it produced a great effect. It would be vain to deny that in the *Letters* there are traces of a petulance which before the days of financial disaster was altogether a stranger to his constitution. But in general his reasoning is sound, while his arguments are cogent, and his illustrations felicitous. Scott must rank with the pamphleteers who have moulded the policy of the nation. The objectionable proposal was

[1] Lockhart, *Life*, p. 616.

withdrawn; the "small note" was saved from extinction; and though for many years to come the predominant party in the British legislature paid little heed to the interests or sensibilities of North Britain, it may safely be said that the administration of that portion of the island has for some time past been conducted upon those enlightened principles of which "Malachi Malagrowther" was the passionate and persistent advocate.

No more than two of Scott's fellow-countrymen had hitherto attempted the novel with conspicuous success, and neither had employed it as a medium for the exhibition of the national character or manners. It is one of the most singular things about Tobias George Smollett (1721–71)[1] that he, who in temperament was a thorough Scot of a certain type, should, in works largely based upon his own experience, have abstained from introducing almost any important traits characteristic of North Britain. Neither Random nor Pickle has anything to differentiate him from an English ruffian; nor can Strap call cousin with Andrew Fairservice, or any other of the servants who occupy so distinguished a place in the Waverley gallery. An exception may be suggested in favour of Smollett's latest and greatest novel, *Humphry Clinker* (1771), and unquestionably that work affords many interesting glimpses of social life in Scotland. But the interest of the piece centres in Matthew Bramble and his household, especially Mrs. Winifred Jenkins, and, though Lismahago's nationality is beyond dispute, I am heterodox enough to doubt whether he is so successful a creation as has sometimes been supposed. It is for this reason that ampler space has not here been accorded to the author of *Roderick Random* (1748) and *Peregine Pickle* (1751), who left his native land early in life, and spent the greater part of his existence in the then lucrative occupation of a journeyman of letters. There can be no doubt that Scott owed something

[1] *Works*, ed. Anderson, 6 vols., Edin. 1820. See also Mr. Henley's *Introduction* prefixed to *Works*, 12 vols., 1899–1900.

to Smollett, for whose writings he had an almost inordinate admiration, and that in the beginning, at all events, of his career as a novelist he was disposed to follow Smollett's example in the style of his narrative and dialogue. The precise debt of Scott to each individual in the throng of British novelists and playwrights would be difficult to trace ; but the episode of Mr. Pembroke and Tom Alibi in the opening chapters of *Waverley* is an unmistakable reminiscence of Dr. Toby, who may also perhaps share with Scott's brother Robert the credit of inspiring the sea-scenes and the sea-dogs in *The Pirate*.[1]

Of Henry Mackenzie[2] (1745–1831), on the other hand, there is in Scott hardly a single trace, unless we note a resemblance in tone and expression between Miss Julia Mannering's letters and some of the correspondence in *Julia de Roubigné* (1777). That novel, together with its predecessors, *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and *The Man of the World* (1773), ceased to be generally read before its author died, and there is small chance of a reaction setting in in its favour. Anything more lachrymose than *Julia* it would in truth be hard to imagine, or anything more imbecile than the behaviour of the personages. Montauban, the hero, writes of the heroine : "The music of Julia's tongue gives the throb of virtue to my heart, and lifts my soul to somewhat superhuman" ; and the sentence is typical of the strain in which the correspondence between the characters is conducted. Julia and Montauban both finally succumb to a dose of poison administered in a fit of jealousy by the latter ; and you cannot help feeling that 'tis better so. Harley, the hero of the *Man of Feeling*, also dies, after passing through all the adventures with cardsharpers, statesmen, and other people who need not be specified, which in the eighteenth century were the portion of the "young

[1] *Vide* Lockhart, *Life*, chap. v., p. 741.

[2] *Works*, 8 vols., Edin., 1808. *Memoir* by Scott, in *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. iv. p. 1.

man from the country." Scott has gone so far as to attribute to Mackenzie the virtue of originality. But to no other has he less claim. His sentiment is barefaced Jean Jacques, as his style is unblushing Sterne.

"He is now forgotten and gone! The last time I was at Silton Hall, I saw his chair stand in its corner by the fire-side; there was an additional cushion on it, and it was occupied by my young lady's lap-dog. I drew near unperceived, and pinched its ears in the bitterness of my soul; the creature howled, and ran to its mistress. She did not suspect the author of its misfortune, but she bewailed it in the most pathetic terms; and, kissing its lips, laid it gently on her lap, and covered it with a cambric handkerchief. I sat in my old friend's seat; I heard the roar of mirth and gaiety around me—poor Ben Silton! I gave thee a tear then: accept of one cordial drop that falls to thy memory now." [1]

Mons'ous affecting, no doubt; but hardly original. Mackenzie often does his imitating with a good enough grace; and in fact his talent was essentially imitative. *The Mirror* (1779–80) and *The Lounger* (1785–86), are indistinguishable from any other tolerable copy of the *Spectator*, and are chiefly interesting as being practically the last of a long line.[2] Yet Mackenzie's own personality is conspicuous and picturesque. He was a link between the old Scotland and the new, between the age of Hume and the age of Scott;[3] and it is when he gives free

[1] *Man of Feeling*, vol. i. p. 8.

[2] That is to say, each is a *mélange* of literary, ethical, and social criticism, with character sketches thrown in. The names of Colonel Caustic, John Homespun, the family of the Mushrooms, and Gabriel Gossip, tell their own story. Few probably remember that Mackenzie invented the name of Mr. Caudle (*Mirror*, No. 5). The following papers, in addition to the celebrated story of La Roche (*Mirror*, Nos. 42–44), are worth looking at: the notice of Burns's poems, 1786 (*Lounger*, No. 97); the paper on nomenclature in fiction (*Mirror*, No. 7); and the account of William Strahan, the printer (*Lounger*, No. 29).

[3] "He has, we believe, shot game of every description which Scotland contains (deer and probably grouse excepted), on the very grounds at present occupied by the extensive and splendid streets of the New Town of Edinburgh; has sought for hares and wild ducks where there are now

play to his memory and recalls the literary and social world with which his youth had been familiar (as he does in his *Memoir* of John Home) that we most highly appreciate those moral and intellectual qualities which procured his recognition among the northern *literati* as the Deacon of their craft. Not the least of his virtues was the generosity of spirit which moved him to give a warm welcome to the productions of the author of *Waverley*.[1]

The complete and adequate discussion of Sir Walter Scott's novels[2] is a task which might lay a heavy tax upon the powers of the greatest critic. Their extraordinary copiousness and variety seem to demand the labour of years and the space of volumes to do justice to them. Yet judging by the majority of Shakespearean commentaries, we have little reason to regret that Scott has not as yet been overlaid with exposition and annotation. He himself has supplied the best possible guide to the novels in his introductions and notes; and what he has not disclosed with regard to the sources whence he drew his materials and hints is scarcely worth knowing. In a volume like the present, exhaustive treatment is out of the question. We can only attempt to deal with some of the salient features of that extraordinary series of works, taking for our guide the unfavourable criticisms which have from time to time been

palaces, churches, and assembly rooms; and has witnessed moral revolutions as surprising as this extraordinary change of local circumstances." (Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. iv. p. 8).

[1] See, for example, his letter to Scott, July 5, 1819, quoted in *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. p. 48 *n.*

[2] The best edition of the novels is that in 48 volumes, Edin., Cadell, 1829–33, rep. 1841, which is the one from which I cite, and 1895. But the editions good, bad, and indifferent, are innumerable. Of criticism on the novels, the best and most suggestive among much that is both good and suggestive, and more that is not, is that of Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott, passim:* of J. L. Adolphus, in *Letters to Mr. Heber* (1821); of N. W. Senior, in *Essays on Fiction* (1864); and lastly of Mr. A. Lang, in his annotated edition of the novels, 48 vols. (1892–94). Mr. Lang's introductions are especially useful in furnishing a brief synopsis of contemporary criticism.

made upon him, and bearing in mind that their relation to the literature of his own country has for us a predominating interest.

In the entertaining dialogue between Captain Clutterbuck and "the author of *Waverley*," which forms the preface to *The Fortunes of Nigel*, Scott good-humouredly pleads guilty to three charges frequently made against him: his treatment of the supernatural, his failure to construct a good plot, and his tendency to "huddle up" the end of all his stories. On the two last points, no judicious apologist will seek to make a stand. Most of his fables are certainly defective in proportion, or in coherence, or in probability.[1] The "long arm of coincidence" has to extend its aid, and even with such assistance it is sometimes not easy to make out what the story is all about. *Rob Roy* is perhaps the most striking instance of a great novel with an almost unintelligible intrigue.[2] As for the "huddling up," nothing could be much worse than *The Pirate*, where a complicated entanglement is resolved in breathless haste, to the intense bewilderment of the reader.

As regards the supernatural, our own generation, less tinctured with the prejudices begotten by an age of reason, will probably be more tolerant than Scott's. The astrology of *Guy Mannering* is eminently pleasing, nor should we ever dream of inquiring too strictly "how much there is in it." The Bodach Glas and the second sight require no apology, for, when employed in the right manner, they are "a great set-off" to any novel. Much more exasperating and much less plausible is some makeshift explanation of a mystery, like the true

[1] While diffuseness is a common fault in the conduct of many of Scott's narratives, it is remarkable how successful he was, from the purely technical point of view, in the short story. *Wandering Willie's Tale* is, of course, *facile princeps*, but *The Highland Widow* and *The Two Drovers* should not be forgotten.

[2] In *St. Ronan's Well*, the plot as it stands is not so much unintelligible as fatuous. It had been well if "the black hussar of literature" had turned as deaf an ear to the suggestion of Ballantyne as he had formerly done to the remonstrances of Blackwood.

meaning of "*Search*, No. II.," as lame a piece of *éclaircissement* as can anywhere be met with. The Dousterswivel business is apparently found tedious by many people, and to these we will gladly sacrifice the White Lady of Avenel, together with any "Cock-lane scratch," or "bounce of the Tedworth drum," which they may require at our hands. But beyond this we are not prepared to go; and when they tell us, with Mr. Senior, that Ailsie Gourlay's prediction of Ravensworth's doom (like the rhyme about "stabling his steed in the Kelpie's flow") is a "useless improbability," we must beg leave, respectfully but firmly, to differ. The suggestion of the supernatural might as well be eliminated from *Wandering Willie's Tale* as from *The Bride of Lammermoor*. *The Bride* is one of the most ambitious of all Scott's novels, and in some respects the finest. Not even the episode of Lord Glenallan in *The Antiquary* can surpass it for intensity of tragic gloom. And much of its power and impressiveness is due to the omens and premonitions of evil with which from the very beginning the narrative abounds. The reader feels that disaster is "in the air": not all the fooling of Caleb Balderstone can banish the sense of imminent doom. The occasional intervals of illusory happiness—the periods when Fate seems to have changed her frown for a smile—merely accentuate the melancholy of the inevitable catastrophe. Without blind Alice, and without the three hags who come to her "streaking," the tale might be affecting or pathetic, but it would cease to be tragedy. Few things in any writer are more awful, as few are more appropriate, than the dialogue between Annie Winnie and Ailsie Gourlay:—

"'That's a fresh and full-grown hemlock, Annie Winnie—mony a cummer lang syne wad hae sought nae better horse to flee over hill and how, through mist and moonlight, and light down in the King of France's cellar.'

"'Ay, cummer! but the very deil has turned as hard-hearted now as the Lord Keeper, and the grit folk that hae breasts like whinstane.

They prick us and they pine us, and they pit us on the pinnywinkles for witches; and, if I say my prayers backwards ten times ower, Satan will never gie me amends o' them.'

"'Did ye ever see the foul thief?' asked her neighbour.

"'Na!' replied the other spokeswoman; 'but I trow I hae dreamed of him mony a time, and I think the day will come they will burn me for't. But ne'er mind, cummer! we hae this dollar of the Master's, and we'll send doun for bread and for yill, and tobacco, and a drap brandy to burn, and a wee pickle saft sugar—and be there deil, or nae deil, lass, we'll hae a merry night o't.'

"Here her leathern chops uttered a sort of cackling ghastly laugh, resembling to a certain degree the cry of the screech-owl.

"'He's a frank man, and a free-handed man, the Master,' said Annie Winnie, 'and a comely personage—broad in the shouthers, and narrow around the lungies—he wad mak a bonny corpse[1]—I wad like to hae the streaking and winding o' him.'

"'It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie,' returned the octogenarian, her companion, "that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him—dead deal will never be laid on his back—make you your market of that, for I hae it frae a sure hand.'

"'Will it be his lot to die on the battleground then, Ailsie Gourlay? Will he die by the sword or the ball, as his forbears hae dune before him, mony ane o' them?'

"'Ask nae mair questions about it—he'll no be graced sae far,' replied the sage.

"'I ken ye are wiser than ither folk, Ailsie Gourlay. But wha tell'd ye this?'

"'Fashna your thumb about that, Annie Winnie,' answered the sibyl,—'I hae it frae a hand sure eneugh.'

"'But ye said ye never saw the foul thief,' reiterated her inquisitive companion.

"'I hae it frae as sure a hand,' said Ailsie, 'and frae them that spaed his fortune before the sark gaed ower his head.'

"'Hark! I hear his horse's feet riding aff,' said the other; 'they dinna sound as if good luck was wi' them.'

"'Mak haste, sirs,' cried the paralytic hag from the cottage, 'and let us do what is needfu', and say what is fitting; for, if the dead corpse binna straughted, it will girn and thraw, and that will fear the best o' us.'"[2]

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[1] Compare Mrs. Gamp, who makes the same remark about her patient, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, ch. xxv.

[2] *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. 1841, vol. ii. p. 227.

Here, as Mr. Lang has justly remarked, is the essence of a thousand trials for witchcraft : and here is a "useless improbability" !

The uninteresting quality of most of Scott's heroes and of many of his heroines has been a frequent topic of remark ; and again there is something in what the critics say, as Scott himself allowed. I am reluctant, I confess, to admit that Edward Waverley is "a sneaking piece of imbecility," as his creator terms him : the judgment is surely a little harsh. But he is not very "heroic," nor is Vanbeest Brown, nor Lovell, nor Morton, nor Frank Osbaldistone, nor Lord Glenvarloch, nor a dozen others. Perhaps Frank Osbaldistone was the least worthy of all to woo and win that queen among heroines, Di Vernon. But when Scott contrasts the heroic with a more commonplace type of woman, it is the latter who is invariably paired off with the hero when the novel doth appropinque an end. It is so in the case of Flora MacIvor and Rose Bradwardine, of Minna and Brenda Troil, of Rebecca and Rowena. That Scott knew better than most what passion is, no sensible man can doubt. But when he took seriously to writing fiction he was past forty, and he regards his lovers not with undiscriminating sympathy, but rather with the mixture of amusement and benevolence characteristic of one who has long since "been through the mill" himself. It is one of the most remarkable features in Scott that, though strongly sympathising with enthusiastic and exalted feeling, he allows the representatives of a more commonplace frame of mind to put in their word, and to state the case on behalf of a view of life in which illusion plays no part. A novelist of the ordinary type, for example, would have seized the opportunity of putting a vigorous and irrelevant covenanting tirade into the mouth of Mortsheugh, the gravedigger, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Mortsheugh is a Scots peasant ; the Scots peasantry is Presbyterian ; *argal*, Mortsheugh must have been a rabid Whig. Such would have been his chain of reasoning. With the

unerring sagacity of genius, Scott represents the old man as comparatively indifferent to the rights and wrongs of the defeated party at Bothwell Bridge, and as wholly occupied with the loss of his own bit mailing, through the improvident and inconsiderate conduct of the Ravenswood family. Similarly, when Mause Headrigg expresses her gladness and pride "to see her bairn ganging to testify for the truth gloriously with his mouth in Council as he did with his weapon in the field," "Whisht, whisht, mither!" replies Cuddie, "Od, ye daft wife, is this a time to speak o' thae things? I tell ye I'll testify naething either ae gate or another." And when the persevering Mause reminds him of his bridal garment—"Oh, hinny, dinna sully the marriage garment!"—Cuddie's only response is a brusque "Awa, awa, mither; never fear me—I ken how to turn this far better than ye do—for ye're bleezing awa about marriage, and the job is how we are to win by hanging." In no place does old Mause appear to such advantage; in none is the practical good sense of her son more triumphant. Another illustration of the same characteristic may be found in *The Pirate*, where the old Zetlander, Haagen, indulges in reminiscences of Montrose's wars :—

"'And Montrose,' said the soft voice of the graceful Minna; 'what became of Montrose, or how looked he?'

"'Like a lion with the hunters before him,' answered the old gentleman; 'but I looked not twice his way, for my own lay right over the hill.'

"'And so you left him?' said Minna in a tone of the deepest contempt.

"'It was no fault of mine, Mistress Minna,' answered the old man, somewhat out of countenance, 'but I was there with no choice of my own; and, besides, what good could I have done?—all the rest were running like sheep, and why should I have staid?'

"'You might have died with him,' said Minna.

"'And lived with him to all eternity in immortal verse!' added Claud Halcro.

"'I thank you, Mistress Minna,' replied the plain-dealing Zetlander; 'and I thank you, my old friend Claud; but I would rather

drink both your healths in this good bicker of ale, like a living man as I am, than that you should be making songs in my honour, for having died forty or fifty years agone. But what signified it? Run or fight, 'twas all one;—they took Montrose, poor fellow, for all his doughty deeds, and they took me that did no doughty deeds at all; and they hanged him, poor man, and as for me——'

"'I trust in heaven they flogged and pickled you,' said Cleveland, worn out of patience with the dull narrative of the peaceful Zetlander's poltroonery, of which he seemed so wondrous little ashamed.

"'Flog horses, and pickle beef,' said Magnus; "why, you have not the vanity to think that, with all your quarter-deck airs, you will make poor old neighbour Haagen ashamed that he was not killed some scores of years since?'" [1]

The Udaller's verdict on the matter is the same as Scott's. There is no homologation of Minna's and Cleveland's heroics; there is no attempt to blast Haagen with ridicule, or to hold him up to scorn as a base knave. The contrast between the two temperaments is presented in fiction as it presents itself in real life; and it is the same instinctive and predestined fidelity to nature which makes Scott conclude one of the most solemn and moving chapters of *Waverley* with the somewhat heartless commentary of Alick Polwarth on the execution of Fergus and Evan Dhu.

Here, then, we may perhaps find an explanation of the notoriously prosaic character of some of Scott's heroes. Vivid as his imagination was, he could not brush aside the *ex post facto* judgments of reason on historical events. When the hero's is the life of rapid action, as in the case of Quentin Durward, he comes off bravely enough. But when, through no fault of his own, he is so situated that he must passively await the development of events, like Harry Bertram and Lovel, or when he has to take sides on a question in the solution of which reason pulls one way and passion or inclination another, he is not so apt to captivate the imagination. Morton's views on the

[1] *The Pirate*, vol. i. p. 260.

public affairs of his time are substantially those of Scott nearly a century and a half later, and Edward Waverley is as wide-awake to the weak points in the young Pretender and his cause, as his creator is. Scott, it may be surmised, would have thought little of a comtemporary who weighed the *pros* and *cons* of the great French war as judicially as these young gentlemen the claims of conflicting parties. Once put a man, however, into the position of being resolved, of being able to be deaf to the voice of prudence, and of having relinquished the attitude of the *bonus paterfamilias*, and we see with what animation and gusto Scott could portray him. Lord Evandale, Burley, and Sergeant Bothwell, are, each in his own way, of the true romantic breed. There is the ring of the genuine metal about Cleveland; and in Nanty Ewart we have one of the most profoundly truthful and fascinating studies of character that ever came from Scott's hand. The Master of Ravenswood, his plume notwithstanding, may be excepted from the list of Scott's "uninteresting" heroes; but it is no heinous offence to hold him less felicitously drawn than Hayston of Bucklaw.

We need not, perhaps, be much distressed by the accusation of inaccuracy in depicting the life of past ages brought against Scott by historians. Mr. Freeman[1] has urged all that can be urged against *Ivanhoe* on this score, and done so with more than his customary moderation and politeness. We must give up our old friends Wamba and Gurth, the Templar and Front de Bœuf, and the sharp line of cleavage between Saxon and Norman described as existing in the reign of Richard I. All that can be pleaded in extenuation is that to "telescope" two or three centuries is a comparatively venial offence when these centuries are remote, and that Scott ceases to perpetrate such enormities (as they seem to grave historical critics) when he deals with later periods. It is true that he does not stick at a convenient anachronism; and the reader

[1] *Norman Conquest*, vol. v. note W.

may well be startled at not a few in *Kenilworth*, besides the reference to the *Tempest* as being, *circ.* 1567, "a comedy which was then new, and was supposed among the more favourable judges to augur some genius on the part of the author." But so manifest a joke upon the ignorant is obnoxious to censure less because Shakespeare was a four-year-old child at the time supposed, than because the allusion savours of being dragged in—like the similar reference in *Nigel* to a quotation from *Macbeth* which "had already grown matter of common allusion in London." It is probably unnecessary to note that such "George de Barnewell" touches are extremely rare in Scott, who wrote out of the fulness of his reading, and had not read merely that he might write.[1] Whatever the degree of historical accuracy which, judged by a strict canon, he attains, his characters are no mere lay-figures, garbed in the quaint robes of a particular period. And as regards the manners and social life of the one tolerably distant era in which we have the best means of checking him, we believe that he will emerge triumphant from the closest scrutiny. The picture of London life, in all its various aspects—from Whitehall to Whitefriars, from the Court to the City—which he places before us in *Nigel* is not merely spirited and vivacious but essentially, and almost literally, true to fact, so far as can be judged. The difficulty, once more, of finding a suitable language for dialogue, which is ever present in the historical novel, is surmounted by Scott with extraordinary success, one can scarce tell how. The dialect employed belongs, perhaps, to no particular age; it may be disfigured here and there by modern locutions, by vulgarisms[2] even—yet the illusion is sustained, and the "Wardour Street" element never becomes obtrusive or irritating. Lastly, on this head, even on the

[1] Master Lowestoffe's account of his game at gleek with Lord Dalgarno is one of the very rare passages which *do* something smell of the lamp.

[2] *E.g.*, "I have brought the *party* hither," (Louis XI. to Galeotti in *Quentin Durward*) where party = person.

assumption that the pictures of past times are vitiated by inexcusable errors, it will at least be admitted that Scott has enriched the world with a group of historical portraits the exact resemblance of which to the originials may be matter of dispute, but which are unrivalled in the brilliancy with which is presented that aspect of the subject which has generally struck the imagination of posterity. Richard in *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman*, Louis XI. in *Quentin Durward*, Claverhouse in *Old Mortality*, Charles II. in *Woodstock* (the sketch of Cromwell in the same novel is now supposed to be too "stagey"), Mary Queen of Scots in *The Abbot*, her cousin in *Kenilworth*, and, above all, her son in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, form a group whose features are so deeply engraved upon the mind of the reading public that half a dozen *savants* could scarce obliterate them.

I have reserved for the last the two most formidable and hotly pressed charges against Scott, of which the first is that his "style" is deplorable. The *locus classicus* for this accusation is Mr. Stevenson's *Gossip on Romance*,[1] in which he takes as his text the episode of Harry Bertram's return to Ellangowan, opines that "a man who gave in such copy [as a certain sentence in the passage he cites] would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper," characterises a great deal of Scott's writing as "languid, inarticulate twaddle," and eke as "ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole," and finally pronounces Scott to have been "utterly careless; almost it would seem incapable in the technical matter of style." Such language appears to be grotesquely exaggerated. What residuum of truth it contained, Scott, as usual, was himself well aware. It seems that his son-in-law occasionally ventured to suggest emendations, which were by no means acceptable. "J. G. L.," he writes in his *Journal*,[2] "kindly points out some solecisms

[1] *Longman's Magazine*, February, 1882; *Memories and Portraits*, 1887.

[2] Vol. i. p. 181, under date April 22, 1826, about three weeks before Lady Scott's death.

in my style, as 'amid' for 'amidst,' 'scarce' for 'scarcely.' 'Whose,' he says, is the proper genitive of 'which' only at such times as 'which' retains its quality of impersonification. Well! I will try to remember all this, but after all I write grammar as I speak, to make my meaning known, and a solecism in point of composition, like a Scotch word in speaking, is indifferent to me. I never learned grammar; and not only Sir Hugh Evans, but even Mrs. Quickly, might puzzle me about Giney's case and horum harum horum. I believe the Bailiff in *The Good-natured Man* is not far wrong when he says, 'One man has one way of expressing himself, and another another, and that is all the difference between them.'" Here is Scott's philosophy of style in a nutshell. That its results were often more curious than satisfactory is plain enough. To it we owe "the superb monarch of the feathered tribes" [1]—meaning the eagle—a fair specimen of the recognised fine English of the age of Dr. Parr. To it we owe the retort of Helen MacGregor, cited by Sir Leslie Stephen.[2] To it we owe the Norna who bids Mordaunt Mertoun begone from under Triptolemus Yellowley's roof:—

"You shall not remain in this hovel to be crushed amid its worthless ruins, with the relics of its more worthless inhabitants, whose life is as little to the world as the vegetation of the house-leek, which now grows on their thatch, and which shall soon be crushed amongst their mangled limbs." [3]

To it we owe Miss Vernon's advice to Rashleigh:—

"Dismiss from your company the false archimage, Dissimulation, and it will better ensure your free access to our classical consultations." [4]

To it we owe Catherine Glover's exhortation to Hal o' the Wynd:—

[1] *Waverley*, vol. i. p. 169.
[2] *Hours in a Library*, vol. i. p. 149.
[3] *The Pirate*, i. 93.
[4] *Rob Roy*, i. 190.

"Throw from you, my dear Henry, cast from you, I say, the art which is a snare to you. Abjure the fabrication of weapons which can only be useful to abridge human life, already too short for repentance, or to encourage with a feeling of safety those whom fear might otherwise prevent from risking themselves in peril. The art of forming arms, whether offensive or defensive, is alike sinful in one whose," &c.[1]

But if Scott's philosophy of style was the parent of passages such as these, of which their tameness is perhaps the chief merit, it was also responsible for many another in which the substantives are very much to the purpose, and the epithets, though never far-fetched or exotic, are eminently appropriate; nor have we any business to inquire whether this result was attained by good luck or good guidance. There are passages descriptive of nature which for beauty and vividness have not been surpassed even by Mr. Ruskin, with his palette of many colours,[2] and there are touches of external circumstance of which the most painfully selected vocabulary could not enhance the effect. Such I conceive to be the "hoarse dashing" of the ocean, with its "multitudinous complication of waves" as heard from within the gaol at Portanferry,[3] or the night wind which brings the "sullen sound of a kettledrum" to Morton's ears, and the breaking of the moon through the clouds, which illuminates the departure of the life-guards from the vicinity of Milnwood.[4] There are passages of animated narrative to which no amount of assiduous polishing could lend more fire and vigour than they possess. The siege of Torquilstone, done into Stevensonese, would probably be less exciting than it is at present. And there are passages of

[1] *The Fair Maid of Perth*, i. 55.

[2] As to the "actual study of nature," the "landscape-gardening of poetry," Scott found that he could get on "quite as well from recollection while sitting in the Parliament House as if wandering through wood and wold; though liable to be roused out of a descriptive dream now and then, if Balmuto, with a fierce grunt, demands, 'Where are your cautioners?'" (Gillies, *Recollections*, p. 24.)

[3] *Guy Mannering*, ii. 243.

[4] *Old Mortality*, i. 304, 314.

splendid rhetoric which more than atone for all that is stilted and heavy in those which we have quoted above. It is a common complaint of Sydney Smith's against Scott that he completely failed in reproducing the ordinary conversation of ladies and gentlemen. He certainly did not reproduce the conversation of Holland House; but be it so. When he gets to the vernacular, however, no one will deny that he is thoroughly at home. The Scots dialect he uses is free from local peculiarities. You cannot say that it is the Scots of the Lothians, or Ayrshire, or the Mearns.[1] It is merely "the purest surviving form of English" (to repeat Mr. Freeman's phrase) at its best. His dialogue in the vernacular is easy, fluent, and pointed; and when something more ambitious and formal than everyday talk is required the same medium never fails. We might illustrate this from old Mucklebackit or Edie Ochiltree,[2] but we cannot do better than reproduce the famous speech of Meg Merrilies to the laird of Ellangowan :—

"Ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan—ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram! This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blither for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses—look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster.—Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh—see that the hare does not couch on the hearthstane at Ellangowan.—Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram—what do ye glower after our folk for?—There's thirty hearts there that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted sunkets, and spent their life-blood ere ye had scratched your finger. Yes—there's thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o' their bits o' bields, to sleep with the tod and the black-cock in the muirs!—Ride your ways, Ellangowan.—Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs—look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up—not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born—God forbid—and make them kinder to the poor, and better folk than their father!—

[1] Francie Macraw in *The Antiquary*, to be sure, speaks Aberdonian, but that exception does not invalidate the general rule.

[2] See, for example, Edie's views on the duello, *The Antiquary*, i. 295.

And now ride e'en your ways ; for these are the last words ye'll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise that I'll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan !" [1]

This is neither "languid, inarticulate twaddle," nor yet "ungrammatical, undramatic rigmarole" ; and it can be paralleled by many other passages in Scott, though perhaps it is surpassed by none, unless it be by Jeanie Deans's apostrophe to Queen Caroline.[2]

Finally we come to the gravest charge of all. It is alleged that Scott's treatment of human character is essentially superficial ; that while he reproduces the outward habit and external manners of his personages, he fails to sound the depths of their inmost nature ; and that consequently his claim to rank along with, or not far below, the greatest artists of the world cannot be substantiated. Hazlitt, whose praise of the Waverley novels is otherwise so discriminating and so generous (consider what it must have cost him to praise the work of so arrant a Tory !) complains that the one thing lacking to Scott is "what the heart whispers to itself in secret, what the imagination tells in thunder." Carlyle puts it in a less impressive way when he makes the well-known remark that "your Shakespeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards ; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them !" And he winds up his criticism with a groan : "Not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for edification, for building up or elevating in any shape ! The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly struggling heart no guidance : the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice." [3] The sentiment has been echoed by many critics, much less entitled to a hearing, who prefer other methods and conventions to those of Scott.

[1] *Guy Mannering*, i. 79.

[2] The critics are all mightily offended at the Queen's, "This is eloquence." But the commentary may perhaps be forgiven in consideration of its truth.

[3] Carlyle, *Essays*, in *Works*, centenary ed., vol. xxix. p. 22.

Carlyle's criticism appears to resolve itself into two heads. With regard to the absence from Scott's novels of a didactic tendency (using the word didactic in its highest and most complimentary signification), all that can be said is, that you can but speak of a book as you find it. If the "sick" or "darkly struggling" heart can find no medicament in Scott, that organ must surely be past all healing; if "the heroic that is in all men" overhears from his lips no wakening voice, its slumbers must indeed be profound.[1] Were it only true that the perusal of those works of fiction has succeeded "in amusing hours of relaxation, or relieving those of languor, pain, or anxiety,"[2] the point might perhaps be waived. As it is, each man must abide by his own experience; and we are not ashamed to own ourselves of the Uncle Adam faction.

On the second branch of Carlyle's contention we should be happy to join issue, were it not for a suspicion that the dispute may narrow itself down into a wrangle about the true method in fiction. If that method be the method of Marivaux; if you must treat your characters as a demonstrator in anatomy treats his subject; if every "i" must be dotted and every "t" crossed; then there is no more to be said for Scott than there is for Fielding or for Shakespeare. If, however, it is maintained that Scott's method is perfectly consistent with a profound knowledge of human nature, but that Scott knew not how to employ it, because his knowledge was defective, I venture to meet that proposition with a categorical and emphatic denial. There are, I should suppose, few passages in any literature in which the transition stage from youth to manhood is so sympathetically and beautifully depicted as in those introductory chapters of *Waverley* which

[1] It is interesting to compare Hazlitt: "What a world of thought and feeling is thus rescued from oblivion! How many hours of heartfelt satisfaction has our author given to the gay and thoughtless! How many sad hearts has he soothed in pain and solitude!" (*Selections*, ed. Ireland, 1889, p. 440.)

[2] Dedication of the *Opus Magnum* to George IV.

are unanimously (it seems) voted "dull"; nor many in in which the female temperament and idiosyncrasy are more subtly and exquisitely indicated than in Rose Bradwardine's letter to Edward Waverley, or Diana Vernon's farewell to Frank Osbaldistone, or (on a somewhat different plane) Jeannie Deans's letters to Staunton, to her father, and to Butler, after her interview with the Queen. To those who argue that, because Scott declines to dwell on the grimy and squalid side of human life, he must needs have been an optimistic ignoramus, it is superfluous to give any elaborate answer. We know that Scott had found out, in Hazlitt's felicitous phrase, that "facts are better than fiction," and we remember Mrs. Heukbane's reminiscences of her youth in *The Antiquary*,[1] and bethink us how, with a single flourish of his wand, the Magician produces an effect which the modern "realist" would have toiled after in vain, expounding through many dreary chapters the gallantries of a small provincial town. But we are prepared to make a "sporting" concession. Let us hand over every English-speaking character to the enemy, and pin our faith in Scott to those of his creations whose language is more or less the old speech of Scotland.

One or two of these also it may be necessary to throw overboard. I had rather hold no brief for Caleb Balderstone, nor yet for Triptolemus Yellowley, though his sister Babbie is well worth a certain quantity of ink. But the rest, from Cosmo Comyn Bradwardine[2] to Jamie Jinker,

[1] "Ah! lasses, an ye had kend his [Monkbarns's] brother as I did—mony a time he wad slip in to see me wi' a brace o' wild-deukes in his pouch, when my first gudeman was awa at the Falkirk tryst—weel, weel—we'se no speak o' that e'enow." (*The Antiquary*, i. 205). The said brother, it will be remembered, died of a cold contracted "while shooting ducks in the swamp called Kittlefittingmoss."

[2] It was apparently fashionable at one time to speak of Scott's "bores," and to include in that category, not merely the excellent Triptolemus, but the Baron, Dominie Sampson, Major Dalgetty, Peter Peebles, and Bartoline Saddletree, to say nothing of Claud Halcro, whose "glorious John" might

the horse-couper, from Dugald Dalgetty to Mrs. Glass, the tobacconist, from Crystal Croftangry to mine host Mackitchinson, from David Deans to Andrew Fairservice, from Nicol Jarvie to Jock Jabos—are they not all, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, friends to live and die for (if we may adapt the emphatic phraseology of Edward Waverley)? Balmawhapple, Duncan MacWheeble, Mrs. Flockhart, Dandie Dinmont, Mrs. MacCandlish, Mrs. Mailsetter, Mrs. Heukbane, Mrs. Shortcake, Cuddie Headrigg, Jenny Dennison, Alison Wilson, Richie Moniplies, Wee Benjie, and a hundred others—for the list might be indefinitely extended—exhibit Scottish life and character with an intimacy of knowledge, an accuracy of detail, and a breadth of sympathy, which have been equalled neither before nor since. Yet unrivalled as is the delineation of national peculiarities, still more remarkable is the grasp of human nature in its more general aspects which elevates Scott's pictures above the level to which the merely provincial limner is capable of attaining. The local colour, vivid and striking as it is, is never permitted to obliterate the broad and firm outlines which are peculiar to the really great artist. This might be illustrated by a dozen famous episodes in which the particular is insensibly merged in the universal. We might appeal to the funeral of Miss Margaret Bertram of Singleside in *Guy Mannering*, and to the meeting of Mrs. Mailsetter and her gossips in *The Antiquary*, two scenes in which Scott's humour has always been admitted to have reached its highest pitch. Or we might appeal to the death of old Dumbiedykes, and to the interview with Queen Caroline, in *The Heart of Midlothian*. Or, again, we might appeal to the scene at the blacksmith's at Cairnvreckan, in *Waverley*, or to the Saturday night gathering at the Gordon Arms at Kippletringan in *Guy Mannering*, or to the Mucklebackit portions of *The Antiquary*. But we shall content

have saved him this disgrace. It would be well if in real life all bores were such good company as the delinquents we have named.

ourselves with citing three comparatively unnoticed passages which seem to display all Scott's most characteristic qualities on the humorous side.

The first of these is the advice of Neil Blane, the landlord of the "howff" in *Old Mortality*, to his daughter :—

"... 'The dragoons will be crying for ale, and they wunna want it, and maunna want it—they are unruly chields, but they pay ane some gate or other. I gat the humle-cow, that's the best in the byre, frae black Frank Inglis, and Sergeant Bothwell, for ten pund Scots, and they drank out the price at ae downsitting.'

"'But, father,' interrupted Jenny, 'they say the twa reiving loons drave the cow frae the gude-wife o' Bell's-moor, just because she gaed to hear a field-preaching ae Sabbath afternoon.'

"'Whisht! ye silly tawpie,' said her father, 'we have naething to do how they come by the bestial they sell—be that atween them and their consciences. Aweel, take notice, Jenny, of that dour, stour-looking carle that sits by the cheek of the ingle, and turns his back on a' men. He looks like ane of the hill-folk, for I saw him start a wee when he saw the red-coats, and I jalouse he wad hae liked to hae ridden by, but his horse (it's a gude gelding) was ower sair travailed; he behoved to stop whether he wad or no. Serve him cannily, Jenny, and with little din, and dinna bring the sodgers on him by speering ony questions at him; but let na him hae a room to himsell, they wad say we were hiding him. For yoursell, Jenny, ye'll be civil to a' the folk, and take nae heed o' ony nonsense and daffing the young lads may say to ye. Folk in the hostler line maun put up wi' muckle. Your mither, rest her saul, could pit up wi' as muckle as maist women, but aff hands is fair play; and if onybody be uncivil ye may gie me a cry. Aweel, when the malt begins to get aboon the meal, they'll begin to speak about government in kirk and state, and then, Jenny, they are like to quarrel—let them be doing—anger's a drouthy passion, and the mair they dispute, the mair ale they'll drink; but ye were best serve them wi' a pint o' the sma' browst, it will heat them less, and they'll never ken the difference.'

"'But, father,' said Jenny, 'if they come to lounder ilk ither, as they did last time, suldna I cry on you?'

"'At no hand, Jenny, the redder gets aye the warst lick in the fray. If the sodgers draw their swords, ye'll cry on the corporal and the guard. If the country folk tak the tangs and poker, ye'll cry on the bailie and town-officers. But in nae event cry on me, for I am

wearied wi' doudling the bag o' wind a' day, and I am gaun to eat my dinner quietly in the spence. And now I think on't, the Laird of Lickitup (that's him that was the laird) was speering for sma' drink and a saut herring—gie him a pu' by the sleeve, and round into his lug I wad be blithe o' his company to dine wi' me; he was a gude customer anes in a day, and wants naething but means to be a gude ane again—he likes drink as weel as e'er he did. And if ye ken ony puir body o' acquaintance that's blate for want o' siller, and has far to gang hame, ye needna stick to gie them a waught o' drink and a bannock—we'll ne'er miss't, and it looks creditable in a house like ours. And now, hinny, gang awa', and serve the folk, but first bring me my dinner, and twa chappins o' yill and the mutchkin stoup o' brandy.'"[1]

The second illustrates the modes of thought and speech of the laird of Ellangowan, than whom there are few more convincing types in Scott's crowded gallery :—

"'Why, Mr. Mannering, people must have brandy and tea, and there's none in the country but what comes this way—and then there's short accounts, and maybe a keg or two, or a dozen pounds left at your stable door, instead of a d——d lang account at Christmas from Duncan Robb, the grocer at Kippletringan, who has aye a sum to mak up, and either wants ready money or a short-dated bill. Now, Hatteraick will take wood, or he'll take bark, or he'll take barley, or he'll take just what's convenient at the time. I'll tell you a good story about that. There was ance a laird—that's Macfie of Gudgeonford—he had a great number of kain hens—that's hens that the tenant pays to the landlord, like a sort of rent in kind. They aye feed mine very ill. Luckie Finniston sent up three that were a shame to be seen only last week, and yet she has twelve bows sowing of victual; indeed her good-man, Duncan Finniston —that's him that's gone (we must all die, Mr. Mannering, that's ower true)—and speaking of that, let us live in the meantime, for here's breakfast on the table, and the Dominie ready to say the grace.'

"The Dominie did accordingly pronounce a benediction, that exceeded in length any speech which Mannering had yet heard him utter. The tea, which of course belonged to the noble Captain Hatteraick's trade, was pronounced excellent. Still Mannering hinted, though with due delicacy, at the risk of encouraging such

[1] *Old Mortality*, vol. i. p. 283.

desperate characters : 'Were it but in justice to the revenue, I should have supposed——'

"'Ah, the revenue lads'—for Mr. Bertram never embraced a general or abstract idea, and his notion of the revenue was personified in the commissioners, surveyors, comptrollers, and riding officers whom he happened to know—'the revenue lads can look sharp enough out for themselves, no ane needs to help them, and they have a' the soldiers to assist them besides ; and as to justice, you'll be surprised to hear it, Mr. Mannering, but I am not a justice of the peace.'

"Mannering assumed the expected look of surprise, but thought within himself that the worshipful bench suffered no great deprivation from wanting the assistance of his good-humoured landlord. Mr. Bertram had now hit upon one of the few subjects on which he felt sore, and went on with some energy—

"'No, sir ; the name of Godfrey Bertram of Ellangowan is *not* in the last commission, though there's scarce a carle in the country that has a ploughgate of land, but what he must ride to quarter sessions, and write J.P. after his name. I ken fu' weel whom I am obliged to. Sir Thomas Kittlecourt as good as tell'd me he would sit in my skirts, if he had not my interest at the last election ; and because I chose to go with my own blood and third cousin, the Laird of Balruddery, they keepit me off the roll of freeholders ; and now there comes a new nomination of justices, and I am left out ! And whereas they pretend it was because I let David MacGuffog the constable draw the warrants and manage the business his ain gate, as if I had been a nose o' wax, it's a main untruth ; for I granted but seven warrants in my life, and the Dominie wrote every one of them, and if it had not been that unlucky business of Sandy MacGruthar's, that the constables should have keepit twa or three days up yonder at the auld castle, just till they could conveniency to send him to the county jail, and that cost me eneugh o' siller. But I ken what Sir Thomas wants very weel. It was just sic and siclike about the seat in the kirk o' Kilmagirdle. Was I not entitled to have the front gallery facing the minister, rather than MacCrosskie of Creochstone, the son of Deacon MacCrosskie, the Dumfries weaver ?'

"Mannering expressed his acquiescence in the justice of these various complaints.

"'And then, Mr. Mannering, there was the story about the road and the fauld-dike. I ken Sir Thomas was behind there, and I said plainly to the clerk to the trustees that I saw the cloven foot. Let them take that as they like. Would any gentleman, or set of

gentlemen, go and drive a road right through the corner of a fauld-dike, and take away, as my agent observed to them, like twa roods of gude moorland pasture? And there was the story about choosing the collector of the cess.'

"'Certainly, sir, it is hard you should meet with any neglect in a country where, to judge from the extent of their residence, your ancestors must have made a very important figure.'

"'Very true, Mr. Mannering. I am a plain man, and do not dwell on these things, and I must say I have little memory for them; but I wish ye could have heard my father's stories about the auld fights of the MacDingawaies—that's the Bertrams that now is—wi' the Irish, and wi' the Highlanders that came here in their berlings from Ilay and Cantire, and how they went to the Holy Land—that is, to Jerusalem and Jericho—wi' a' their clan at their heels—they had better have gaen to Jamaica, like Sir Thomas Kittlecourt's uncle—and how they brought hame relics, like those that Catholics have, and a flag that's up yonder in the garret. If they had been casks of Muscavado, and puncheons of rum, it would have been better for the estate at this day; but there's little comparison between the auld keep at Kittlecourt and the castle o' Ellangowan. I doubt if the keep's forty feet of front. But ye make no breakfast, Mr. Mannering; ye're no eating your meat. Allow me to recommend some of the kipper. It was John Hay that cacht it Saturday was three weeks, down at the stream below Hempseed ford,' &c., &c., &c.[1]

Mrs. Nickleby is good, but surely Godfrey Bertram is even better.

Our third selection is the merest fragment from the conversation of the little party which is winding its way up the West Bow from the Grassmarket after the announcement of Porteous's reprieve:—

"'I'll tell ye what it is, neighbours,' said Mrs. Howden, 'I'll ne'er believe Scotland is Scotland ony mair, if our kindly Scots sit down with the affront they hae gien us this day. It's not only the blude that *is* shed, but the blude that might hae been shed, that's required at our hands; there was my daughter's wean, little Eppie Daidle—my oe, ye ken, Miss Grizzel—had played the truant frae the school as bairns will do, ye ken, Mr. Butler——'

[1] *Guy Mannering*, vol. i. p. 48.

"'And for which,' interjected Mr. Butler, 'they should be soundly scourged by their well-wishers.'

"'And had just cruppen to the gallows' foot to see the hanging, as was natural for a wean; *and what for mightna she hae been shot as weel as the rest o' them, and where wad we a' hae been then?* I wonder how Queen Carline (if her name be Carline) wad hae liked to hae had ane o' her ain bairns in sic a venture?'"[1]

Dislocated from its context, this snatch of dialogue loses something of its exact propriety. Yet even so it appears to illustrate that touch in handling character, of which Scott alone among British writers, since Shakespeare's death, with the possible exception of Fielding, has mastered the secret.

The Waverley novels have been translated into most foreign languages, but it would be affectation to pretend that they can be rightly appreciated by any people save the compatriots of the author. For every Scot, however, they are a complete guide to his fellow-countrymen, and he alone can testify to its correctness and sufficiency. There is no element of the esoteric in admiration for Scott. His genius, so wide in its scope, so benevolent in its humanity, makes its appeal to *quivis ex populo*, as the inimitable Saddletree would say.[2] Even injudicious and misplaced praise cannot make us think less of him; and the rhetoric of public banquets fails to vulgarise David Deans or his daughter Jeanie. Take him all in all, he is, perhaps, the greatest *unconscious* artist in literature that the world has seen since Homer. Not that he was unaware when his day's task had "come twangingly off," but that he achieved his results, both in poetry and prose, with rapidity

[1] *The Heart of Midlothian*, vol. i. p. 224.

[2] This statement must be qualified by the observation that a certain class of Scott's characters can be *fully* enjoyed, in all probability, by the members of only one profession. To extract the full flavour out of MacWheeble, Greenhorn and Grinderson, Nichil Novit, Saddletree, Saunders Fairford, and Peter Peebles is a privilege reserved for the Scots lawyer—some might be bold enough to say for the Scots advocate!

and ease, writing "as the spirit moved him" out of the fulness of an overflowing imagination, with no pauses for the discovery of the *mot propre*, or for the elaboration of those refinements to which a more self-conscious artist instinctively turns. His fame, which, perhaps, suffered a slight obscuration during the middle of the Victorian era, has once more emerged into the full blaze of noonday; and the opinion of competent judges appears to be gradually tending towards the view which regards him as the most conspicuous and important figure in the annals of the European literature of the nineteenth century.

APPENDIX

Chronological List of Sir Walter Scott's Principal Works

1802–3. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*
1805. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*
1808. *Marmion.*
„ Edition of *Dryden.*
1810. *The Lady of the Lake.*
1811. *The Vision of Don Roderick.*
1813. *Rokeby.*
„ *The Bridal of Triermain.*
1814. Edition of *Swift.*
„ *Waverley.*
1815. *The Lord of the Isles.*
„ *Guy Mannering.*
1816. *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk.*
„ *The Antiquary.*
„ *Tales of My Landlord,* 1st series, containing the *Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality.*
1817. *Rob Roy.*
1818. *Tales of My Landlord,* 2nd series, containing *The Heart of Midlothian.*
1819. *Tales of My Landlord,* 3rd series, containing *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *A Legend of Montrose.*
„ *Ivanhoe.*
1820. *The Monastery.*
„ *The Abbot.*
1821. *Lives of the Novelists.*
„ *Kenilworth.*
„ *The Pirate.*
1822. *The Fortunes of Nigel.*
1823. *Peveril of the Peak.*
„ *Quentin Durward.*
„ *St. Ronan's Well.*
1824. *Redgauntlet.*
1825. *Tales of the Crusaders,* comprising *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman.*
1826. *The Letters of Malachi Malagrowther.*
„ *Woodstock.*
1827. *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte.*

1827. *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 1st series, containing *The Highland Widow*, *The Two Drovers*, and *The Surgeon's Daughter*.
„ *Tales of a Grandfather*, 1st series.
1828. *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 2nd series, containing *The Fair Maid of Perth*.
„ *Tales of a Grandfather*, 2nd series.
1829. *Anne of Geierstein*.
„ The "*Opus Magnum*."
„ *Tales of a Grandfather*, 3rd series.
1830. *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.
1831. *Tales of My Landlord*, 4th series, containing *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*.

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE: THE "EDINBURGH REVIEW" AND "BLACKWOOD"

When we turn to the lesser lights, we find that the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, which practically coincide with the period of Scott's literary activity, were characterised by extraordinary productiveness in almost every department of writing. Poetry, fiction, theology (or, rather, the composition of sermons), political economy, metaphysics, and the study of antiquities, had their enthusiastic and successful devotees. History, no doubt, had declined from her high estate under Hume and Robertson, though the works of Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747–1813), the son of William (1711–92), who had vindicated Mary Queen of Scots, and Malcolm Laing (1762–1818),[1] who attacked the Ossian legend, are by no means to be lightly brushed aside. But, of all the branches of literature, there was none which attracted to itself a more remarkable collection of ability and mental vigour than criticism, and what may be called the higher journalism.

Scotland had been indifferently well provided with periodicals, of every description then known, during the preceding century.

[1] *History of Scotland*, 4 vols., 1802.

Mere news had been supplied by *The Edinburgh Courant*, which, founded in 1705, continued a somewhat chequered existence down to 1886, and by the *Caledonian Mercury* (1720), which ultimately came to be merged in the *Scotsman*. The *Mercury* was for some time printed and published by Thomas Ruddiman (1674–1757),[1] Hume's predecessor in the keepership of the Advocates' Library, whose name is best remembered as the author of those *Rudiments of the Latin tongue* (1714), which until a comparatively recent date formed the Scotch school boy's first introduction to the classics. Such journals, it need scarcely be said, dependent as they were upon the press of the southern metropolis for information upon politics, foreign and domestic, were no very great things.

Not to be behind the age, Edinburgh had had its *Tatler*, "by Donald Macstaff of the North" (said to be the work of Robert Hepburn of Bearford), so early as 1711. But the first really noteworthy periodical to have any connection with literature was the *Scots Magazine*, established in 1739, taken over by Constable in 1800, improved and furbished up (with the aid of the ex-editors of *Blackwood*) in 1817, and finally defunct after the financial collapse of its proprietor. The *Scots Magazine* was a monthly, modelled upon the pioneer of all such undertakings, the *Gentleman's*, and no small portion of its contents consisted of extracts from books, and from publications of the same class with itself. The "Exchanges" was indeed as indispensable a department in an eighteenth-century magazine as it is in any far-west newspaper of to-day. More interesting, and probably more prosperous while it lasted (1768–1784), was *The Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement*, founded by Walter Ruddiman (1719–81), a nephew of the grammarian, and proprietor of a separate printing establishment from his. The circulation of this periodical is said to have reached a total of 3,000, and the miscellaneous character of its

[1] See *The Ruddimans in Scotland*, by G. H. Johnston, Edin., 1901, and the review of that work in the *Banffshire Journal*, December 31, 1901.

bill of fare no doubted attracted even more readers than the fact that Robert Fergusson was among its contributors. On its very title-page, the *Weekly Magazine* professed to be a sort of "review of reviews," and every number, starting with prose, original and selected, proceeds through poetry, to that tolerably full chronicle of the week, which at length brought the publisher into trouble with the Inland Revenue authorities for evading the newspaper stamp duty. Neither the *Scots* nor the *Weekly Magazine* can honestly be said to have been very strong on the critical side. Their efforts in this direction were no improvement upon those of the *Critical* and the *Monthly* in London ; and the short-lived *Edinburgh Review* of 1755, which we have already dealt with, held out by far the most flattering promise of judicious and independent reviewing. But nearly half a century was to elapse before that promise was fulfilled in its namesake.

That the second *Edinburgh Review*, with whose blue cover and yellow back we are all familiar, was projected in Jeffrey's house, up three or four flights of stairs, in Buccleuch Place ; that Sydney Smith was its true begetter ; that the editorship was originally in commission ; that the first number appeared on October 10, 1802 ; and that its success was instantaneous ; are facts which at this time of day need only be repeated by way of formality. In addition to Smith and Jeffrey, Francis Horner, John Archibald Murray, Henry Brougham, Thomas Brown, and Thomas Thomson, were privy to the inception of the venture ; of whom all became contributors, though Brown, resenting editorial interference, soon withdrew his assistance. The little band of projectors embraced men of varying ability, but of the same cast of opinion ; if disposed to admire one another, they were at least unprejudiced (save by political or theological bias) in their views of current literature ; and (what perhaps told most strongly in favour of independent judgment and good work) a rule was laid down from the very beginning that all contributions, without exception, were to be

paid for, and that upon a liberal scale.[1] To enable this principle to be carried into effect, it was necessary to find an enlightened and enterprising publisher ; and that publisher was forthcoming in the person of the most striking figure in the annals of "the trade" in Scotland.

There had been enterprising enough publishers, or booksellers, in Edinburgh before. The names of Creech, Bell, Bradfute, Donaldson, and especially Elliot (all enumerated and discussed in Constable's extremely interesting note appended to volume i. of his *Correspondence*) were in their day synonymous with uprightness, sagacity, and strict attention to business. But Archibald Constable (1774–1827)[2] far excelled all his predecessors and contemporaries in the scope of his native abilities (for to education he owed not much) as well as in the range and magnitude of his ambition. Rarely has such a combination been seen of the sanguine and the prudent temperament ; and although his ultimate failure would seem to point to the predominance of the former, his nickname, "The Crafty," leaves no doubt that the latter made at least an equally strong impression upon all who were brought into contact with him. Cockburn describes him as "the most spirited bookseller that had ever appeared in Scotland" ;[3] and Scott thus sums up his character : "He was a prince of booksellers ;[4] his views sharp, powerful and liberal ; too sanguine, however, and, like many bold and successful schemers, never knowing when to stand or stop, and not always calculating his means to his objects with mercantile accuracy. He was very vain, for which he had some reason, having raised himself to great

[1] See on this point Sydney Smith's excellent letter to Constable in Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, vol. i. p. 134. This laudable practice was also conformed to by the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*.

[2] See *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents* by his son, T. Constable, 3 vols., Edin., 1873. Consult also Lockhart's *Life of Scott, passim*.

[3] *Life of Jeffrey*, i. 133.

[4] While in "the trade" Murray was the *Emperor*, and the Longmans the *Divan*, Constable was the *Czar of Muscovy*.

commercial eminence, as he might also have attained great wealth with good management. *He knew, I think, more of the business of a bookseller in planning and executing popular works than any man of his time.*" [1] The most remarkable of all his conceptions was the projected *Miscellany*, of the disclosure of which to Scott Lockhart has given so graphic a description.[2] It is no small testimony to his breadth of view that, having for twenty years of unprecedented and uninterrupted success, been the publisher of a series of poems in quarto at two guineas, and of novels in three or four volumes at half a guinea apiece, he should have realised that "the trade was in its cradle," and that a fortune awaited the publisher who should venture to bring good literature (in the shape of half-crown or three shilling volumes) within the reach of every one. The scheme,[3] owing to Constable's bankruptcy, never fulfilled the expectations entertained of it. The "Napoleon of the realms of print" had a hatred of accounts and balance sheets. And so he went down in the financial crisis of 1825–6, having ever been heedless of Deacon Jarvie's great maxim—that you should never put out your arm further than you are sure of being able to draw it back. Such was the publisher of the *Edinburgh Review*, a work to which, with many faults, belongs the credit of having raised the standard of periodical literature to a height never before dreamt of, and since pretty constantly sustained.

The direction of the *Edinburgh* rested, from 1803 to 1829, with Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850),[4] "the greatest," according

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 11. On p. 12 *n.* will be found an interesting note vindicating Constable's judgment of literary property, if not his prudence.

[2] *Life of Scott, ut sup.*, p. 548.

[3] Scott pronounced it "the cleverest thing that ever came into that cleverest of all bibliopolic heads." Lockhart to Constable, in Constable's *Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 306.

[4] *Life and Correspondence*, by Lord Cockburn, 2 vols. 1852. The life, which occupies the first volume, is not broken up into chapters, nor does it boast an index! The greatest of critics has been frequently criticised: by none more fairly or to better purpose than by Mr. Saintsbury in *Essays in English Literature*, 1780–1860 (1890).

to his biographer, "of British critics," and certainly among the greatest of British editors. Jeffrey was the son of one of the Depute-clerks of Session; and was educated at the High School of Edinburgh, the College of Glasgow (where his father would not permit him to attend Professor Millar's lectures) and, for the space of one Academic year, at Queen's College, Oxford, which he hated. He was admitted to the Scottish bar in 1794, and, though he attached himself to what for long was the losing side in politics, became in time one of the busiest and most successful members of that branch of the legal profession. His style of pleading, and the characteristics of his oratory, which was extraordinarily voluble and rapid in delivery, are minutely described in *Peter's Letters*. He was elected Dean of Faculty in 1829 (when he abandoned his editorial chair), was appointed Lord Advocate on the accession of his party to power in 1831, and was raised to the Bench in 1834.

The political views of Jeffrey and of the *Edinburgh* while under his control, might be summarised by a cynic, with some truth, as "distrust of the people tempered with fear." He was haunted by a constitutional pessimism or timidity, which occasionally reached the pusillanimous. No politician was ever a greater slave to the word "inevitable." He believed, during the long French war, that Napoleon was certain to win, and he "hankered after peace" chiefly, as he owns, "out of fear and out of despair."[1] Between him and Brougham equally must be divided the credit or discredit of the article on Don Pedro Cevallos which was the signal for the final alienation of his Tory contributors (including Scott) and the establishment of the *Quarterly Review*.[2] Defenders may not be wanting for Jeffrey's political opinions, but few,

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 194. "My honest impression is," he writes to Horner in 1808, "that Bonaparte will be in Dublin in about fifteen months, perhaps sooner." He had "put his money on the wrong horse."

[2] The article appeared in the *Edinburgh* for October, 1808. For the last word on its authorship, see Macvey Napier's *Correspondence*, p. 308 *n*.

probably, will absolve him of all blame for the needlessly flippant tone which his *Review* habitually adopted in discussing questions of religion. On this matter, though not in the article of politics, the Whig reviewers continued, and exaggerated, the tradition of the "moderate" school of thinkers in the eighteenth century.

The list of Jeffrey's contributions to the *Edinburgh* embraces no fewer than two hundred articles on a great variety of topics.[1] In his youth he had been a voracious reader, an assiduous commentator, an indefatigable abstractor; and there were few topics on which he was unwilling to pronounce with a considerable share of self-confidence. "Cocksureness" is one of the notes of his writing, as indeed it is of the work of his staff—"cocksureness," and the species of rationalism which regards as inherently ridiculous whatever cannot be explained in a couple of sentences. Essential superficiality consequently vitiates those of his essays in which depth of thought is not to be compensated by scrupulous lucidity of expression. Many subsequent critics have imitated Jeffrey in this fault, and have moreover aped too sedulously his more obtrusive tricks of manner—his affectation of the judicial character, his implicit claim to a superiority of information only stopping short of omniscience. They have been less solicitous to study his virtues, and, while reproducing his hardness and want of charm, have entirely failed to surprise the secret of his clean-cut and vivacious prose. Perhaps the only thing of his composition in which the gift of clear and pointed writing deserted him is his inscription for the foundation stone of the Scott Monument,[2] which compares very unfavourably with any of the recognised masterpieces in this, a very special and difficult, kind.

That Jeffrey was ever unconsciously influenced in his

[1] See Cockburn's *Life*, vol. i. p. 419. A selection made by himself, containing most of his best stuff, was published in 4 vols. 1843; reprinted, 1 vol. 1853.

[2] *Life*, vol. i. p. 374.

literary criticism by party passion it might be rash to deny; that he was ever so consciously influenced it would, I believe, be wholly unwarrantable to affirm.[1] His age was one in which party feeling ran high; and the first inquiry of the average reviewer seems generally to have been whether the author at the bar was a Whig or a Tory. He certainly was not exempt from the prejudice that a Whig is probably a good man, and a Tory generally a bad one. But he holds that comforting doctrine with nothing like the fervour with which his excellent biographer, Lord Cockburn, clung to it. The *Memorials* (1856) and the *Journal* (1874) of Henry Cockburn (1779–1854), invaluable though they are as social documents, constitute the most perfect expression of that complacent and self-satisfied frame of mind which, at various periods, has marked the party of "progress," and has caused the enemy to blaspheme with uncommon heartiness. The notice of *Marmion* will naturally be cited as an instance in which Jeffrey sacrificed considerations of literary taste and personal friendship to political partisanship. In that light it was regarded at the time.[2] But, deplorable as this performance was, I see no reason to doubt that the criticism was written in perfect good faith, and that the writer was no more consciously animated by illegitimate motives than he was when he perpetrated the rest of his celebrated *faux pas*.

Every schoolboy in these days of "general knowledge" has those unlucky blunders at his fingers' ends. He can gibe at the prediction that the fame of Rogers and Campbell would outlive that of Shelley and Byron, and wax warm over "This will never do!" though he might be hard put to it to

[1] There is no trace in Jeffrey's *Life* or correspondence, so far as I am aware, of the "see-if-I-don't-give-the-varlet's-jacket-a-dusting" tone.

[2] "The *critique* on Marmion is so improper that it seems to divulge a secret hitherto unknown, that the editor of the first literary journal in Britain is capable of being seduced by temporary political motives to betray the cause of good sense and taste." (John Murray to Constable, in the *Correspondence* of the latter, vol. i. p. 277.)

explain why posterity has decided that the *Excursion will* do. No critic in steady practice for a quarter of a century, and more, can hope to avoid pronouncing some judgments which future generations are certain to regard as wrong-headed and even outrageous. Perhaps Jeffrey pronounced more than his fair share of such judgments, and certainly he pronounced them in an extremely dogmatic, aggressive, and irritating manner. The attempt to justify them has indeed for some time been abandoned. It is no better excuse for them, that they represented at the time a large body of public opinion, than that, when the century was half way through, Lord Cockburn seems to have suspected nothing wrong with them. What may reasonably, however, be said for Jeffrey is, that it was his minor, not his major, premise, that was amiss, and that he went astray not so much in his general principles of criticism as in his application of them to particular cases.

If we could apply to Jeffrey's *Contributions* the method which Boswell desired to have applied to Johnson's *Lives*, and could digest them into a critical code, we should find the root-principle of the *Edinburgh* reviewer to be this, that literature is an art. It follows that in literature there must be the careful adaptation of form to matter; in other words, that you cannot hope to turn out good literature by the haphazard employment of the commonplace and promiscuous vocabulary and diction of every-day life. It was loyalty to this fundamental axiom which, as we conceive the matter, set Jeffrey up in arms against Wordsworth, who certainly had propounded heretical doctrine on the point in no ambiguous language. Jeffrey could never rid himself of the notion that Wordsworth's practice must necessarily square with his theory. He failed to make allowances for the inconsistency of human nature, and he attacked the *Excursion* full of the preconceived idea that, being Wordsworth's, it must be constructed upon principles which imply the very negation of all ordered art whatever. That, upon reading the work,

he ought to have abandoned such an idea is true. It is also true that in *Marmion* he should have been eager to welcome a new form at least as artistic as any of the older forms in which his æsthetic theories found their (to him) most congenial expression. He did not approach Burns with any such preconception, as the following extract demonstrates :—

"One other remark is of a more general application, and is addressed to the followers and patrons of that new school of poetry against which we have made it our duty to neglect no opportunity of testifying. Those gentlemen are outrageous for simplicity, and we beg leave to recommend to them the simplicity of Burns. He has copied the spoken language of passion and affection with infinitely more fidelity than they have ever done, on all occasions which properly admitted of such adaptation. But he has not rejected the helps of elevated language and habitual associations, nor debased his composition by an affectation of babyish interjections and all the puling expletives of an old nursery-maid's vocabulary. They may look long among his nervous and manly lines before they find any 'Good lacks!' 'Dear hearts!' or 'As a body may says' in them; or any stuff about dancing daffodils and sister Emmelines. Let them think with what infinite contempt the powerful mind of Burns would have perused the story of Alice Fell and her duffle coat, of Andrew and the half-crown, or of little Dan without breeches, and his thievish grandfather. Let them contrast their own fantastical personages of hysterical schoolmasters and sententious leechgatherers with the authentic rustics of Burns's *Cottar's Saturday Night* and his inimitable songs, and reflect on the different reception which those personifications have met with from the public. Though they will not be reclaimed from their puny affectations by the example of their learned predecessors, they may, perhaps, submit to be admonished by a self-taught and illiterate poet, who drew from Nature far more correctly than they can do, and produced something so much liker the admired copies of the masters whom they have abjured." [1]

Why could he not approach the "stampmaster" with as open a mind? But it is unjust to brand him as a blockhead or a Philistine. The zeal of his house had eaten him up; and his admiration of deliberate design in literary art led him to

[1] Jeffrey, *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 421.

look with too favourable an eye upon the merely artificial. As Mr. Saintsbury has pointed out, he has a Frenchman's devotion to the "classical" ideals, combined with a Frenchman's devotion to sentiment of a somewhat crude and primitive kind. What he admired in Dickens, as his letters testify, was not the Gamps, and the Moulds, and the Squeerses, but the little Nells and the Paul Dombeys—especially their deathbeds.

It is easy, then, to vilipend Jeffrey as a critic, for his weaknesses are manifest, and he assuredly makes no pretence to being more "sympathetic" than he is. We cannot compare him as a master of criticism either with Scott or with his other contributor, Hazlitt. Yet, though he bestowed much pains upon the attempt to dissemble it, the root of the matter was in him. And even if he makes no special appeal to a reader of the present day, when more lenient standards than the *Judex damnator* are thought to become a critic—even if we perversely refuse to learn anything from what he has to say about Richardson, or Swift, or Burns—we may, at all events, be entertained for one while by his unflagging spirits. There is something invigorating in the freshness and "gusto" which distinguish all his work. Decades of incessant reviewing left him not jaded, nor petulant, nor "stale." He comes to his task as buoyant, as gay, as well primed with ideas, as keenly interested in the game, as if he were a young fellow in the Speculative commencing critic. Of no man could that be said whose love for literature was not sincere and profound. The following passage, excerpted from one of his most vigorous essays, may convey some slight idea of his inextinguishable vivacity :—

"By this time he [Warburton] seems to have passed over from the party of the Dunces to that of Pope; and proclaimed his conversion pretty abruptly by writing an elaborate defence of the *Essay on Man* from some imputations which had been thrown on its theology and morality. Pope received the services of this

voluntary champion with great gratitude ; and Warburton, having discovered that he was not only a great poet but a very honest man, continued to cultivate his friendship with very notable success. For Pope introduced him to Mr. Murray, who made him preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and to Mr. Allen of Prior Park, who gave him his niece in marriage, obtained a bishopric for him, and left him his whole estate. In the meantime, he published his *Divine Legation of Moses*—the most learned, most arrogant, and most absurd work which had been produced in England for a century—and his editions of Pope and Shakespeare, in which he was scarcely less outrageous and fantastical. He replied to some of his answerers in a style full of insolence and brutal scurrility, and not only poured out the most tremendous abuse on the infidelities of Bolingbroke and Hume, but found occasion also to quarrel with Drs. Middleton, Lowth, Jortin, Leland, and indeed almost every name distinguished for piety and learning in England. At the same time he indited the most high-flown adulation to Lord Chesterfield, and contrived to keep himself in the good graces of Lord Mansfield and Lord Hardwicke ; while in the midst of affluence and honours he was continually exclaiming against the barbarity of the age in rewarding genius so frugally, and in not calling in the civil magistrate to put down fanaticism and infidelity. The public, however, at last grew weary of these blustering novelties. The bishop, as old age stole upon him, began to doze in his mitre, and though Dr. Richard Hurd, with the true spirit of an underling, persisted in keeping up the petty traffic of reciprocal encomiums, yet Warburton was lost to the public long before he sunk into dotage, and lay dead as an author for many years of his natural existence." [1]

Jeffrey's wittiest and most useful lieutenant on the *Edinburgh* was Sydney Smith, who falls outside our province ; but his most energetic and troublesome assistant, Henry Peter Brougham (1778–1868),[2] though a Cumbrian by extraction, was born in Edinburgh, could count Principal Robertson for his great-uncle, and is therefore entitled to some notice here. From the Scottish, Brougham proceeded to the English Bar,

[1] Jeffrey, *Essays*, vol. iv. p 339.

[2] Lord Brougham's *Autobiography*, 3 vols., 1871, is far from trustworthy, and may be corrected by Lord Campbell's account of him in the *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 213.

at which his greatest forensic triumphs were achieved. When the Whigs returned to power for the first time after many years, he was raised to the woolsack, but the experiment was not repeated during that party's subsequent terms of office. In truth, the many valuable qualities which Brougham possessed were vitiated by an almost maniacal vanity. No public man made himself so consistently ridiculous during a considerable tract of time than he ; and no contributor can ever have laid a heavier burden upon his editor than was imposed by his preposterous jealousy and sensitiveness upon Jeffrey and his successor. He regarded himself as indispensable to the success of the *Edinburgh* (he is said to have written the whole of one number, much as Mrs. Oliphant at a later date was said to have written an entire number of *Blackwood*) ; and the picture of his relations with Macaulay furnished by Macvey Napier's *Correspondence* is exquisitely diverting. His contributions to the *Edinburgh* were collected by himself in three volumes in 1856. But his speeches[1] are better reading than his essays, and superior to either are his *Historical Sketches of Statesmen in the Time of George III.*,[2] in which his disagreeable characteristics are kept well in the background.

Of the original *Edinburgh* reviewers, none was more respected in his own department and in his own day than Thomas Brown (1778–1820), the Dr. Brown whom Mr. John Mill invariably mentions with so much deference and ceremony in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. Brown, though the joint occupant with Dugald Stewart of the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, was by no means a disciple of the Scotch school of thought, but leant rather to empiricism. He published some *Observations on the Nature and Tendency of the Doctrine of Mr. Hume* (1804), in which, while justifying the great sceptic's view of the relation of cause and effect, he

[1] 4 vols. 1838–45.

[2] 6 vols., 1839–45.

endeavoured to prove that it did not necessarily lead to scepticism. But, though he abandoned the line which had found most adherents in Scotland for the preceding quarter of a century, he was faithful to the academic tradition of "eloquence," of which we have already had occasion to speak.

In regard to the *Edinburgh*, Brown's importance lies less in his actual co-operation, which, as we have explained, was brief, than in the fact that he is typical of the attitude of the University to the new venture. To say nothing of Dugald Stewart, who gave practical as well as moral support, the more outstanding members of the Academic section of Edinburgh society were in sympathy with the *Review*. John Playfair (1748–1819), John Leslie (1766–1832), both successively professors of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Sir David Brewster (1781–1868), the inventor of the kaleidoscope and the stereoscope, and long afterwards Principal of the College (1859–68), were men of high respectability, and were, or had been in their day, men of conspicuous talent. All were in sympathy with this new movement, and it is easy to see how much weight the sympathy of such learned and estimable men must necessarily have carried.

To Chalmers, who wrote in the *Edinburgh* while the century was yet young, we shall have occasion to return. Of Thomas Thomson (1768–1852) it must suffice to state that he was one of the most learned antiquaries of his age, and that to his industry and research is due the authoritative edition of the Scots Acts of Parliament begun (with volume ii.) in 1814 and brought to a successful conclusion in twelve volumes, folio, in 1875. John Ramsay M'Culloch (1789–1864), who began to contribute to the *Edinburgh* in 1818, enjoyed a far wider celebrity than Thomson, though it may be questioned if it rested upon an equally solid foundation. He published his *Principles of Political Economy* in 1825, and his *Essay on the Circumstances which determine the rate of wages and the condition of the labouring*

classes in the following year; and he edited the works of David Ricardo in 1846. He belonged to the most orthodox sect of the economists, and his writings were consequently in great request at one time as vehicles of instruction in that "science." But fashions change; economic orthodoxy is something blown upon, and the umquhil editor of the *Scotsman* (for M'Culloch presided over that newly-founded journal from 1818 to 1827) has ceased to represent any one of the numerous factions which now wrangle over one of the most chaotic and elusive branches of human knowledge.

These, then, were among the chief Scotsmen [1] who fought under the banner which Jeffrey, on demitting office, handed on to Macvey Napier (1776–1847),[2] a writer to the signet and the first occupant of the chair of Conveyancing founded by his Society. Napier had won his spurs, not only as a writer in the *Review*, but also as the editor of the *Supplement* (1814–23) to the sixth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,[3] which will always be remarkable as one of the most signal proofs of the enterprise, munificence, and sagacity of "The Crafty." Napier had also been hotly engaged on the Whig side in some of the most desperate conflicts of party warfare, and the pamphlet, *Hypocrisy Unveiled* (1818), which attacked Wilson and Lockhart with extreme violence, is believed to have come from his pen. But his reign over the *Edinburgh*, though it tolerated no departure from "plain Whig principles,"

[1] Francis Horner (1789–1817), though blameless in personal character, is not of sufficient importance from a literary point of view to require extended notice. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), the most brilliant of Jeffrey's recruits, savours little of the nationality to which by descent he belonged; nor is there aught so distinctively Scottish about that excellent Whig and man, Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832), as to entitle him to much room in these pages.

[2] *Selections from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier, Esq.*, ed. by his son, 1879.

[3] The first edition of this celebrated work, appeared in 3 volumes, 1768–71, under the auspices of Andrew Bell, Colin Macfarquhar, and William Smellie. Napier also edited the seventh edition (1830–42).

was not distinguished, or disgraced, by any exaggerated outburst of political fanaticism or acrimony. Nay, in some respects he may be said to have changed the tone of the periodical for the better; and the acceptance and publication of Sir William Hamilton's famous review of Cousin in the first number for which he was responsible (Oct., 1829),[1] may be taken to mark the abandonment of the tradition of unseasonable flippancy as applied to matters of high and abstruse thought.

If it be true that the fame of Brougham has been singularly transient considering his great abilities, the remark is almost equally applicable to that of Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856).[2] No man displayed greater promise in youth, first at Glasgow College, and afterwards at Balliol, where he held the Snell exhibition, and from which he departed with a "first in Greats." He made little, to be sure, of the Bar, which he chose for a profession on his return to Scotland. But when Wilson was preferred before him to the chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh on Dr. Brown's death, it must have been almost as plain then, as it is now, that the better man had been passed over.[3] His reputation was enhanced by the articles which he wrote for the *Edinburgh*, notably by those on University Reform, and his election to the Professorship of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh in 1836 was hailed with general applause, and was regarded as a tardy reparation to depressed merit of no common order. His learning was exceptionally wide and profound; and, though he was a little too apt to project schemes which came

[1] Jeffrey declared this article to be "beyond all doubt the most unreadable thing that ever appeared in the *Review*." (Napier, *Correspondence*, p. 70.)

[2] *Discussions*, 3rd ed., 1866; *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, ed. Mansel and Veitch, 4 vols., 1858–60; *Memoir* by Veitch, 1869. See also J. S. Mill, *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, 5th ed., 1878.

[3] Politics, it need scarcely be said, were at the bottom of an appointment which may be paralleled, though not justified, by many similar performances of the town council during the Whig *régime*.

to nothing, his habits were marked by method and industry. As a professor he was a great success, commanding in all cases the attention and respect, and in not a few the enthusiastic devotion, of his pupils. His favourite doctrines were championed by one of the ablest metaphysicians who adorned Oxford during the century, and denounced by one of the feeblest logicians that ever attempted to reason accurately. Yet now, there is scarce a Hamiltonian in the land. He is repudiated with zeal alike by empiricists and neo-Hegelians. His influence is imperceptible in modern thought; and there is no sign that the wheel of fashion will bring even a modified form of his system into vogue again. Wherein, then, lies the secret of the eclipse of this once brilliant luminary?

We may suspect, in the first place, that much of the reputation which he enjoyed during his lifetime was due to a commanding and distinguished personality. His appearance was eminently imposing, and, though few fragments of his conversation have been preserved, it is clear from his biography that he was a striking and authoritative talker. But we may be certain, in the second place, that the almost repellent style in which most of his speculations were clothed has militated strongly against the permanency of his fame. Here the very extent of his erudition told against him. The flow of his speech is constantly interrupted by an appropriate quotation from some obscure schoolman or illustrious poet.[1]

[1] A striking contrast to Sir W. Hamilton's methods is afforded by the work of George Combe (1718–1847), Mr. Cobden's favourite philosopher, and an apostle of phrenology. His *Constitution of Man* (1828) consists of propositions which would now be generally admitted in theory, and sometimes regarded in practice: as, that you should take great care of your health, and be very particular as to the lady whom you marry. But even the existence of an *ad hoc* Combe Trust has failed to supply Combe's memory with enough salt to keep it sweet. He illustrates the contemporary appetite for hard and solid facts, catered for otherwise by works popularising the discoveries of astronomical science, such as those of Mrs. Mary Somerville (1780–1872), and John Pringle Nichol (1804–59), Professor of Astronomy at Glasgow.

It may all have sounded very well from the professor's own lips, but it is not easy reading in the closet. Some allowance must perhaps be made for the complicated and technical nature of his subject matter. Yet, if Mansel could expound the "philosophy of the unconditioned" in a strain of highly animated and impressive rhetoric, there seems no good reason for supposing that Hamilton would necessarily have sacrificed clearness and order by being a little less harsh and a little more attractive. From a purely literary point of view he is, perhaps, at his best in the tract[1] which he contributed to the non-intrusion controversy, yet even there he rises to no very lofty heights. It is undesirable that loose thinking should be disguised in rodomontade, and Hamilton did a good day's work when he substituted accurate teaching for vague and empty declamation in his class-room; but few spectacles are more agreeable than that of philosophy walking hand-in-hand with literature. It is high time for us now, however, to retrace our steps, more especially as, after Napier's time, the headquarters of the *Edinburgh* were transferred to London, whence they have not yet been shifted again to the north.

In 1809, as we have mentioned, the *Quarterly Review* was established, under the editorship of Gifford, for the express purpose of rivalling the *Edinburgh*. This function it performed to admiration, and in the new periodical the Tory party was able to point to a voice which spoke with no less authority on matters of taste and learning than that of the opposite side. In Edinburgh itself, however, the supremacy of the original *Review* remained unshaken. It was still the organ of enlightenment as opposed to prejudice; of progress as opposed to stagnation; of sanguine youth as opposed to dull middle age; of cleverness as opposed to stupidity. To differ from the *Edinburgh* was to sin against the light, to proclaim one's self a boor, to be "behind the age." In short, the "blue-and-yellow," thanks partly to its academic following,

[1] *Be not Schismatics, be not Martyrs by Mistake*, Edin., 1843.

was invested with that halo of "culture," which is so valuable an item in the assets of such a publication. But haloes, after all, are composed of unsubstantial material; and the ineffable self-satisfaction in which the conductors and the admirers of the *Edinburgh* basked, was destined, before the end of another decade, to receive a rude and disagreeable shock.

William Blackwood (1776–1834)[1] was a bookseller and publisher, who, commencing business in a very small way, had worked himself into a position in "the trade" in Edinburgh second only to that of Constable. He had published the first series of the *Tales of My Landlord* for Scott, or rather for "the author of *Waverley*";[2] he was the correspondent and ally of John Murray; and his shop, No. 17, Princes Street—the first of its kind to be opened in the new town—was the resort of all who professed to take an interest in literature. The description of the saloon and its master in *Peter's Letters* will bear reproduction once again:—

"The length of vista presented to one on entering the shop has a very imposing effect; for it is carried back, room after room, through the various gradations of light and shadow, till the eye cannot trace distinctly the outline of any object in the furthest distance. First, there is as usual a spacious place set apart for retail business, and a numerous detachment of young clerks and apprentices, to whose management that important department of the concern is intrusted. Then you have an elegant oval saloon, lighted from the roof, where various groups of loungers and literary dilettanti are engaged in looking at, or criticising among themselves, the publications just arrived by that day's coach from town. In such critical colloquies, the voice of the bookseller himself may ever and anon be heard mingling the broad and

[1] See *William Blackwood and His Sons*, by Mrs. Oliphant, 2 vols. Edin., 1897, a most valuable contribution to the literary history of the nineteenth century.

[2] It will be remembered how the connection between Scott and Blackwood was severed, owing to the interest taken by the latter in the literary side of his business. Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, p. 335; *William Blackwood and His Sons*, vol. i. pp. 69 *et seq.*

unadulterated notes of the Auld Reekie music; for, unless occupied in the recesses of the premises with some other business, it is here that he has his usual station. He is a nimble, active-looking man of middle age, and moves about from one corner to another with great alacrity, and apparently under the influence of high animal spirits. His complexion is very sanguineous, but nothing can be more intelligent, keen, and sagacious, than the expression of the whole physiognomy; above all, the grey eyes and eyebrows, as full of locomotion as those of Catalani. The remarks he makes are in general extremely acute—much more so indeed than those of any member of the trade I ever heard speak upon such topics."

We may venture to anticipate a little and continue the quotation :—

"The shrewdness and decision of the man can, however, stand in need of no testimony beyond what his own conduct has afforded, above all, in the establishment of his Magazine (the conception of which, I am assured, was entirely his own), and the subsequent energy with which he has supported it through every variety of good and evil fortune. It would be very unfair to lay upon his shoulders any portion of the blame which particular parts of his book may have deserved; but it is impossible to deny that he is well entitled to a large share in whatever merit may be supposed to be due to the erection of a work founded, in the main, upon good principles, both political and religious, in a city where a work upon such principles must have been more wanted, and, at the same time, more difficult, than in any other with which I am acquainted.

"After I had been introduced in due form, and we had stood for about a couple of minutes in this place, the bookseller drew Mr. Wastle aside, and a whispering conversation commenced between them, in the course of which, though I had no intention of being a listener, I could not avoid noticing that my own name was frequently mentioned. On the conclusion of it Mr. Blackwood approached me with a look of tenfold kindness, and requested me to walk with him into the interior of his premises—all of which, he was pleased to add, he was desirous of showing to me. I of course agreed, and followed him through various turnings and windings into a very small closet, furnished with nothing but a pair of chairs and a writing-table. We had no sooner arrived in this place, which, by the way, had certainly something very mysterious in its aspect, than Mr. Blackwood began at once with these words: 'Well, Dr. Morris, have you seen our last Number? Is it not perfectly

glorious?—My stars, Doctor, there is nothing equal to it! We are beating the Reviews all to nothing—and, as to the other Magazines, they are such utter trash.' To this I replied shortly that I had seen and been very much amused with the last number of his Magazine, intimating, however, by tone of voice as well as of look, that I was by no means prepared to carry my admiration quite to the height he seemed to think reasonable and due. He observed nothing of this, however; or, if he did, did not choose that I should see that it was so. 'Dr. Morris!' said he, 'you must really be a contributor. We've a set of wild fellows about us; we are in want of a few sensible, intelligent writers, like you, sir, to counterbalance them; and then what a fine field you would have in Wales—quite untouched—a perfect Potosi. But anything you like, sir, only do contribute. It is a shame for any man that dislikes whiggery and infidelity not to assist us. Do give us an article, Doctor.'"[1]

William Blackwood, then, being a good Tory, and being likewise ambitious of emulating Constable, the proprietor and publisher of the *Edinburgh Review*, established in April, 1817, the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, under the joint editorship of Thomas Pringle (1789–1834) and James Cleghorn (1778–1838), both of whom, by a curious coincidence, "skipped upon staves," or, in plain English, were lame. The *Magazine*, during the opening months of its existence, grievously disappointed the sanguine expectations of its originator.[2] Its contents were eminently commonplace; the greatest deference was paid to Whig authority; and the venture held out no prospect of pecuniary success. A change had to be made; the editors were informed that the periodical would terminate with No. 6; they transferred their services to Constable; and in October, 1817, appeared the first number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine—quantum mutatus ab illo!* It is only necessary to compare Pringle and

[1] From *Peter's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 187.

[2] Lockhart's language in the extract *supra* is sufficiently emphatic and unambiguous to negative Hogg's characteristic claim to being "the beginner and almost sole instigator" of the *Magazine*. See Hogg's *Memoir* prefixed to *The Mountain Bard*, 3rd ed., 1821.

Cleghorn's production with the other to realise how mediocrity had given place to pre-eminent talent; how the fumbling amateur had been superseded by journalists with a grasp of "actuality" and of their business. The contributors to the new series of the *Magazine* were young and inexperienced; but they created a profound sensation. The opening number under the new *régime* was assuredly not dull. It contained a violent attack on Coleridge, now known to be Wilson's, and the first of a series of pungent articles on the Cockney school of poetry, suspected of being Lockhart's. But what set Edinburgh in a blaze was the *Translation from an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript*, bearing to be "preserved in the Library of Paris (Salle 2nd, No. 53, B.A.M.M.)." Few literary *jeux d'esprit* have had such a startling success. It was a declaration of war to the knife against the Whigs, and Whigs and weak-kneed Tories alike were aghast at the boldness of the unexpected attack.[1] Read without the key to its meaning, and without a proper understanding of the circumstances of the time, the *Chaldee Manuscript* must seem dull except in so far as it is scurrilous. But the key is now readily accessible, and he must indeed be unversed in the literary history of the period who has still

[1] It may be convenient to cite Maga's *Apologia*, as contained in the preface to vol. xi., and leave the reader to judge of its validity: "The simple truth of the affair lies in a nutshell. For a series of years the Whigs in Scotland had all the jokes to themselves. They laughed and lashed as they liked:—and while this was the case, did anybody ever hear them say that either laughing or lashing were (*sic*) among the seven deadly sins? People said at times, no doubt, that Mr. Jeffrey was a more gentlemanly Whip than Mr. Brougham, that Sydney Smith grinned more good-humouredly than Sir James Mackintosh, and so forth; but all these were satirists, and strange to say, they ALL *then* rejoiced in the name. Indeed, take away the merit of clever satire from most of them, and they shrink to pretty moderate dimensions. Is Mr. Jeffrey a Samuel Johnson? Is Mr. Brougham an Edmund Burke? Is Sir James Mackintosh a Gibbon? These men were all satirists, it is true; but their fame does not rest altogether on satire.—Q.E.D." It may be mentioned that *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, founded in 1832 in the advanced liberal interest by William Tait (1793–1864), a well-known bookseller and publisher, expired in 1846.

to learn that "the man who was crafty" is Constable; that "the man clothed in plain apparel, whose name was as it had been the colour of ebony," is Blackwood; that "the Scorpion who delighteth to sting the faces of men" is Lockhart; that "the great wild Boar from the forest of Lebanon" is Hogg; and that "the beautiful Leopard from the valley of the palm-tree, whose going forth was comely as the greyhound, and his eyes like the lightning of fiery flame," was Wilson. The best passage in the piece is probably the account of the plain man's visit to Scott in search of assistance, which is identical, word for word, with the narrative of "the Crafty's" visit to Abbotsford on the same errand :—

"44. Then spake the man clothed in plain apparel to the great magician who dwelleth in the old fastness, hard by the river Jordan, which is by the Border. And the magician opened his mouth, and said, Lo! my heart wisheth thy good, and let the thing prosper which is in thy hands to do it.

"45. But thou seest that my hands are full of working, and my labour is great. For lo I have to feed all the people of my land, and none knoweth whence his food cometh, but each man openeth his mouth, and my hand filleth it with pleasant things.

"46. Moreover, thy adversary also is of my familiars.

"47. The land is before thee, draw thou up thy hosts for the battle in the place of Princes, over against thine adversary, which hath his station near the mount of the Proclamation; quit ye as men, and let favour be shewn unto him which is most valiant.

"48. Yet be thou silent, peradventure will I help thee some little." [1]

The least excusable passage in the *Manuscript* is the reference to Sir John Graham Dalyell (1775–1851), who had edited a volume of old Scottish poems (1801), and whose claim of damages for slander Blackwood settled extrajudicially rather than go into Court. But every one was up in arms against the audacity and licence of the new periodical. Mackenzie and Tytler both desired that the *Magazine* might no longer

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 91.

be supplied to them. The hubbub was deafening; and the offending article was withdrawn from the second edition of the number which it had so materially assisted to sell. What Blackwood suffered over the *Manuscript*, however, was but a foretaste of what he was to endure for several years to come. His "young men" were incorrigible, though Lockhart, at least, professed the most correct sentiments, and deprecated the extravagances of party in *Peter's Letters* and in the very pages of the *Magazine* itself. Mr. Blackwood exercised a good deal of editorial supervision. He could put his foot down upon occasion, and refuse admittance to something especially outrageous. But his chief contributors led him a pretty dance, his remonstrances were frequently disregarded, and the only drop of consolation in his cup was supplied by the rapid and consistent growth of "ma Maga" (as he is said to have been in the habit of calling it) in popular favour.

Throughout these years of stress and anxiety—years in which duels and actions for slander were constantly in the air—the publisher was splendidly loyal to his contributors. Never did he disclose the identity of the author of any article; and the difficulty of detecting a writer was enhanced by an elaborate system of mystification carried on with the aid of pseudonyms. Mr. Wastle, Dr. Sternstare, Baron von Lauerwinkel, and Ensign O'Doherty, were mythical personages who did not always represent the same human being. It would be rash to assume that the three first were *always* Lockhart; and we know that the last was originally Captain Hamilton, and afterwards Maginn. The system, in short, of the *Magazine* was that most attractive and piquant species of anonymity which allows of an article being attributed by the intelligent public to two or three out of several well-known hands, but precludes the possibility of absolutely precise identification. None knew at the time who was responsible for which verse of the *Chaldee Manuscript;* and no one knows now. Hogg pretends to have suggested it, and his claim, for once,

may pass. Wilson and Lockhart were, in all likelihood, the authors of the best parts of it. Sir William Hamilton is said to have composed one verse, at the cost of an immoderate fit of laughter. But we cannot say, this was Hogg's, this was Wilson's, this was Lockhart's, and so on. It was a joint-production; finished, probably, ἐν συμποσίῳ. Even so we cannot trace, if it were worth while to try, the authorship of those daring articles in subsequent numbers which, however good-nature and good feeling might deplore them, assuredly did no harm to the periodical.[1]

The politics of the *Magazine* were strongly Tory; and it combined the advocacy of Tory principles with an appeal to the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, which was daily growing in numbers and influence, and which the flippant and half-sceptical tone of the *Edinburgh* was little calculated to conciliate. Thus, instead of espousing the Jacobite or Royalist side in its dealings with history, it was strongly of the Covenanting faction; and, though the form of the *Chaldee Manuscript* was highly displeasing to strict churchmen, amends were made by subsequent articles in which the attitude of Constable's publication to religion was vigorously, and indeed savagely, attacked. One of the most notable papers, for example, in the early numbers of the *Magazine* was an extremely unflattering review of Sharpe's edition of Kirkton's *History of the Church of Scotland* (1817),[2]

[1] Of later articles, the attack on Playfair was probably the least justifiable. But the article on "The Sorrows of the Stot" (J. R. M'Culloch) is far beyond anything which the etiquette of modern journalism would tolerate, and so is the famous *Pilgrimage to the Kirk of Shotts*, amusing as it is.

[2] Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe (1781–1851) was a singular character, with an unusual appetite for all manner of scandal past and present, and also with a really sound knowledge of the antiquarian side of some periods in Scottish history. His *Ballad Book* (1823) was reprinted in 1880, having been edited by the still more learned and industrious David Laing (1793–1878), who had been secretary to the Bannatyne Club, and who was Librarian of the Signet Library for many years. Sharpe (whose *Cor-*

from the pen, we may be certain, of Lockhart. The editor's annotations on Kirkton, which are certainly diverting enough, had given prominence to many things by no means of the sort to find favour with a strong Presbyterian ; and the son of the manse rebukes the derider of the Covenanters for his ribald commentary with some dignity and no small asperity. It is interesting to note the very different tone of Scott's review of the same work in the *Quarterly* (January, 1818). But neither the extreme Presbyterian proclivities of the *Magazine*, nor its controversial excesses, at which, while he disapproved, he was fain to laugh, prevented Scott from countenancing, and even supporting, the new venture. We have seen that, according to the *Chaldee Manuscript*, the Magician had assumed an attitude of benevolent neutrality as between Blackwood and Constable. But the "man clothed in plain apparel" had, in truth, been astute enough to enlist Scott's sympathy by requesting William Laidlaw to become a regular contributor, and had thus contrived to secure Scott's assistance, direct and indirect, as well.

In questions of literature the *Magazine* was able to take up a strong position. The two main articles of its creed were faith in Wordsworth and the "Lakers," and abhorrence of the "Cockney" school, which included every one, from Keats to Leigh Hunt, who had been praised in a Whig journal, or who was suspected of holding Whig principles. From the former of these tenets there were occasional back-slidings, such as the inexplicable attack on Coleridge in the first number of the second volume. But from the latter it never swerved. If a Cockney said "yes," that was reason good for *Maga* to say "no"; or, as Wilson very frankly put it in his review of Tennyson's poems (May, 1832), "Were the Cockneys to go to church, we should be strongly tempted to break the Sabbath."

respondence, ed. Allardyce, was published in two volumes in 1888) excelled with his pencil in the art of historical caricature. His representation of Queen Elizabeth dancing is a masterpiece.

But, perhaps, the best stroke of luck for the *Magazine* came with the discovery in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of a new and extraordinarily effective vehicle for the expression of opinion on every variety of topic. No one knows who invented the *Noctes*, though Wilson generally gets the credit of it; and "Christopher North" and "Timothy Tickler" were familiar *eidola* to the readers of the *Magazine* before they began to meet regularly round the hospitable board of Ambrose. If the whole series, which began in March, 1822, and was continued until February, 1835, could be adequately indexed, it would probably turn out that there is scarcely a subject in heaven or earth, in literature or life, on which the *dramatis personæ* do not state their views. The convention had its day, and could not now be revived with any prospect of success. The mannerisms, the nicknames, the stage directions, might be faithfully copied, as they often have been by inferior artists. But the haggis would prove to have lost its flavour, and the oysters their sappiness; satiety would soon come of the bumpers of whisky-toddy; and all the mirth and gaiety and spirit would be found to have evaporated from the evening's entertainment. The outcome of such a stirring of the dry bones would be, at the best, a little harmless and ineffectual fooling; at the worst, a good deal of inane buffoonery. Yet for several years the *Noctes* were the most prominent and popular feature in current periodical literature; and those who are most familiar with them will be the least apt to wonder that so it should have been.

To write "a *Noctes*" was the summit of every contributor's ambition; and even to assist in the composition of one was a distinction which did not fall to every contributor's lot—it never, for example, fell to Samuel Warren's. Many heads and many hands went to the making of a single symposium, and here again it is impossible in many cases to attribute to each author his exact share in the singular compound. We know, however, that the chief *Noctes* men were Wilson, Lockhart,

Maginn, and Hogg, of whom Maginn does not fall within our scheme. Tradition has always assigned to Wilson the largest interest in the series, and, since we are probably justified in assuming that Professor Ferrier proceeded upon the best authority in including certain portions of the *Noctes* in the collected edition of his father-in-law's works, where they occupy four volumes, it would seem that tradition has, for once, not been far out.

John Wilson (1785–1854)[1] was a native of Paisley, and inherited a considerable fortune, amassed by his father in the gauze-weaving industry of that town. Educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, he married early, and settled down on the banks of Windermere to a life of cultured ease and leisure. The loss of his fortune, however, placed him under the necessity of earning a livelihood by his own exertions, and accordingly he removed to Edinburgh, where he passed advocate in 1815. But the work of the bar, and the systematic habits of life which it imposes for a considerable period of the year, were uncongenial to Wilson. He gravitated towards literature, in which he had already made some mark with a poem entitled *The Isle of Palms* (1812), and his opportunity came (for his politics were Tory) with Mr. Blackwood's establishment of his *Magazine* upon a new footing in the latter half of 1817. Wilson, from the very beginning, was one of the publisher's right-hand men. His capacity for work was enormous, though his industry was fitful; his physique was magnificent;[2] his animal spirits were of the highest. He soon became identified in the public mind with the not wholly imaginary

[1] *Works*, ed. Ferrier, 12 vols., Edin., 1855–58. *Memoir*, by his daughter Mrs. Gordon, 1862; reprinted 1879. Mr. Saintsbury has discussed his work fully in *Essays in English Literature*, 1890.

[2] None of the extant portraits of Wilson quite come up to Lockhart's graphic picture in *Peter's Letters*, vol. i. p. 130: "His hair is of the true Sicambrian yellow; his eyes are of the lightest, and at the same time of the clearest blue; and the blood glows in his cheeks with as firm a fervour as it did, according to the description of Jornandes, in those of the 'praelio gaudentes, praelio ridentes Teutones' of Attila."

character of Christopher North ; nay, so strong was his personal ascendency, and so striking a figure did he make in the eyes of his contemporaries, that he was commonly supposed to be the editor of *Maga:* which no one but a Blackwood has ever been. It must have required all William Blackwood's patience and knowledge of character to work with a contributor of such value and importance, whose judgment, nevertheless, was liable to be distorted by sudden impulse, and whose fits of boisterous elation were almost certain to be followed by periods of the most severe depression.

In 1820 occurred the great event of Wilson's life. He was selected by the Town Council of Edinburgh, as we have already noted, in preference to Sir William Hamilton, to fill the vacant chair of Moral Philosophy in "the town's college." The appointment turned out better than might have been expected. Wilson kept up the tradition of "eloquence," and if he failed to teach his class a great deal, he at least entranced them by his oratory. His philosophical remains have never been published. But his professorship brought him prominently before the public ; he became a personage ; and after Scott's death he was regarded as the chief representative of letters in Scotland. He was in great request on all those ceremonial and convivial occasions on which a copious pouring forth of glowing sentiment is desiderated : we can imagine him in his element at a Burns banquet, where, indeed, Dr. Peter Morris first made his acquaintance.

But there is nothing easier than to under-rate Wilson's abilities, and, in a moment of exasperation, to believe that he was no more than a superior sort of Professor Blackie. The picture presented to us by the filial piety of Mrs. Gordon has never been quite accepted as wholly convincing ; and the attempt to make a hero of him is vain, after Mrs. Oliphant's chapter upon him in her *Annals* of the house of Blackwood. He was a creature of moods, the sport of contending emotions, destitute of what is called ballast ; and his mental constitution

was singularly out of keeping with his robust physical frame. It is not an edifying spectacle, that of Wilson, after some more than usually violent outburst in *Maga*, exhorting and imploring old Ebony to stand firm and say nothing, while himself is shivering with apprehension of the legal or physical consequences of his identity being revealed. All these failings, we say, are so conspicuous as to throw his many excellent and admirable qualities into the background. But they must not blind us to his genius, for genius he unquestionably had, though of an irregular and spasmodic kind.

In poetry he had a spark, perhaps more than a spark, of the true fire, though none of his verse has passed into the common stock which lingers in the public memory. Many a worse poem makes more noise to-day in the world than *The Isle of Palms*. Not wholly free from conventionality, (the "new," not the time-honoured, classical, conventionality), and far from satisfactory as a whole, it contains fine passages such as the closing lines, which we reproduce :—

> "O, happy parents of so sweet a child,
> Your share of grief already have you known ;
> But long as that fair spirit is your own,
> To either lot you must be reconciled.
> Dear was she in yon palmy grove,
> When fear and sorrow mingled with your love,
> And oft you wished that she had ne'er been born ;
> While in the most delightful air
> The angelic infant sang, at times her voice
> That seemed to make even lifeless things rejoice,
> Woke, on a sudden, dreams of dim despair,
> As if it breathed, 'For me, an orphan, mourn !'
> Now can they listen when she sings
> With mournful voice of mournful things,
> Almost too sad to hear ;
> And when she chants her evening hymn,
> Glad smile their eyes, even as they swim,
> With many a gushing tear.
> Each day she seems to them more bright
> And beautiful—a gleam of light

That plays and dances o'er the shadowy earth !
It fadeth not in gloom or storm—
For Nature chartered that aerial form
In yonder fair Isle when she blessed her birth !
The Isle of Palms ! whose forests tower again,
Darkening with solemn shade the face of heaven.
Now far away they like the clouds are driven,
And as the passing night-wind dies my strain ! " [1]

Neither is Wilson at his best in ordinary, sustained, prose narrative. The *Trials of Margaret Lyndsay* (1823) is not a great work ; and the *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822) represents a species of fiction of which the literature of Scotland is full to overflowing. We know that *Elder's Deathbed*, we know that *Elder's Funeral ;* and we would willingly deny ourselves the " melancholy pleasure " (as the ridiculous phrase used to go) of attending either the one or the other. Most of the *Lights and Shadows*, in short, are pure " Kailyard." [2]

In criticism, Wilson is an extraordinary mixture of perspicacity and blindness, of the sound and the perverse, of the sagacious and the wayward, of the brilliant and the provoking. The review of Tennyson's *Poems chiefly Lyrical*, already mentioned, is as good a specimen as any other of this strange jumble of inconsistent qualities. The good ones predominate beyond all question ; but it upsets the equanimity of a reader —it gets " on his nerves," as the modern phrase has it—to be interrupted in the middle of a really luminous and suggestive piece of criticism by some irrelevant private crotchet of the critic's, or some wild and irresponsible flight of paradox. For those who care for a minimum of tares mingled with their wheat, or a minimum of chaff immixed with their grain, Wilson is clearly not the man, nor the *Essays Critical and Imaginative*, nor yet *The Recreations of Christopher North*, the book.

[1] From *The Isle of Palms*, canto iv., *Works*, vol. xii.

[2] It is betraying no secret to mention that for this happy nickname, which has attained so much currency, the world is indebted to Mr. W. E. Henley and to no one else.

It is not till we come to the nondescript sort of writing which forms part of the contents of the last-named collection, as it constitutes the whole of the *Noctes*, that we find Wilson in his glory—his powers extended to their utmost capacity, his genius running riot at its own sweet will. It may be said that a liking for the *Noctes* is essentially an acquired taste; and it is certain that, if this be so, it can only be acquired by assiduous study.[1] You cannot learn to love your *Noctes* by reading them in snippets. But the taste is well worth taking a good deal of trouble to come by. Few books hold out the promise of such inexhaustible variety; and few are so penetrated with a lusty joy of life. Wilson at his highest is like Rabelais and Diderot rolled into one. Is it character-drawing you desire? Nothing better can be wanted than the Shepherd, a creation of true genius, a very type of fiction dexterously super-imposed upon fact—his Scots speech the very acme of the vernacular—his humour that happy blend of the national with the universal which we remarked in Scott. Is it the feeling for external nature? There are, not merely set passages in which all the arts of rhetoric are pressed into the service—"full dress" descriptions of mountain and moor, loch and river, hillside and plain, only to be surpassed in literature of the very highest rank—but also exquisite vignettes of scenery, charming snatches of landscape, momentary glimpses of the country, which are even more truly significant of the observant eye and the recording brain. Whole pages of enthusiasm might be written on the pictures of active outdoor life—the bathing scene at Portobello occurs to us as not the least memorable; and whole volumes about the viands and the drink, the "properties" of this unique drama. But for the queasy and dyspeptic, the *mot d'ordre* is avaunt! nor let the unfortunates who "can't read *Pickwick*" imagine that they can read the *Noctes*.

[1] For this reason, Sir John Skelton's selection, entitled, *The Comedy of the Noctes Ambrosianæ* (Edin., 1876) had better be eschewed in favour of the complete work.

With all their merits, the *Noctes* do not lend themselves readily to quotation, and I have therefore gone elsewhere for a couple of selections to illustrate, in so far as such selections can, Wilson's peculiar gifts. They both, as I venture to think, show his firm grasp of detail (or wealth of imagination, if the reader prefers the expression), and his amazing power of producing a complete and finished picture by a series of strokes dashed on to the canvas as it were, with breathless rapidity. The first piece also discloses his vein of social satire, for its subject is an Edinburgh dinner party in the 'twenties.

"We were some half-hour ago speaking of the Fashionable World—were we not—of Edinburgh? Why, in Edinburgh, there is par-excellence no fashionable world. We are—as the King—God bless him—once very well observed, when all we Sawnies happened to be dressed in our Sunday's best—a Nation of Gentlemen; and in a Nation of Gentlemen, you have no notion how difficult, or rather how impossible, it is to make a Fashionable World. We are all so vastly pleasant and polite—low-breeding among us is so like high-breeding in any other less distinguished district of the globe, that persons who desire to be conspicuous for the especial elegance of their manners, or the especial splendour of their blow-outs, know not how to set about it,—and let the highest among them be as fashionable as they will, they will hear an army of chairmen 'gurgling Gaelic half-way down their throats,' as they keep depositing dowager after dowager, matron after matron, mawsey after mawsey, virgin after virgin, all with feathers 'swaling in their bonnets,' and every father's daughter among them more fashionable than another, in the gas-lighted hall of a palace in Moray Place inhabited by a most fashionable Doubleyou Ess—about a dozen of whose offspring, of various sizes and sexes, at each new arrival, keep glowering and guffawing through the bannisters on the nursery story, the most fashionable little dirty red-headed dears that ever squalled in a scrubbing-tub on the Plotter's Saturday Night; while ever and anon fashionable servant-maids, some in female curiosity—proof of an enlightened mind—and others, of whom it appears that 'the house affairs do call them hence,' keep tripping to and fro, one with a child's nightcap in her hand, and another with something else equally essential to its comfort before getting into bed—while it inspires you with a fine

dash of melancholy to behold, on such a night of fashionable festivities, here and there among the many men apparently butlers, footmen, valets, waiters, and so forth—many of them fashionably powdered with oat and barley meal of the finest quality—some in and some out of livery, blue breeches and red, black breeches and grey—you are inspired, we say, with a fine spirit of melancholy to discern among 'these liveried angels lackeying you,' the faces of Saulies, well known at fashionable funerals, and who smile upon you as you move from room to room, as if to recall to your remembrance the last time you had the satisfaction of being preceded by them into that place of Fashionable Resort—the Greyfriars' Churchyard."[1]

The second is even more remarkable, and presents, by the methods of the "lightning artist," a sketch of boyhood and youth which cannot be matched for vivacity and animation.

"What! surely if you have the happiness of being a parent, you would not wish your only boy—your son and heir—the blended image of his mother's loveliness and his father's manly beauty—to be a smug, smooth, prim, and proper prig, with his hair always combed down on his forehead, hands always unglaured, and without spot or blemish on his white-thread stockings? You would not wish him, surely, to be always moping and musing in a corner with a good book held close to his nose—botanising with his maiden aunts—doing the pretty at tea-tables with tabbies, in handing round the short-bread, taking cups, and attending to the kettle—telling tales on all naughty boys and girls—laying up his penny-a-week pocket-money in a penny-pig—keeping all his clothes neatly folded up in an untumbled drawer—having his own peg for his uncrushed hat—saying his prayers precisely as the clock strikes nine, while his companions are yet at blind man's buff—and puffed up every Sabbath eve by the parson's praises of his uncommon memory for a sermon—while all the other boys are scolded for having fallen asleep before Tenthly? You would not wish him, surely, to write sermons himself at his tender years, nay—even to be able to give chapter and verse for every quotation from the Bible? No. Better far that he should begin early to break your heart, by taking no care even of his Sunday clothes—blotting his copy—impiously pinning pieces of paper to the Dominie's tail, who to him was a second

[1] From *Old North and Young North*, in *Works*, vol. v. p. 204.

father—going to the fishing, not only without leave, but against orders—bathing in the forbidden pool, where the tailor was drowned—drying powder before the schoolroom fire, and blowing himself and two crack-skulled cronies to the ceiling—tying kettles to the tails of dogs—shooting an old woman's laying hen—galloping bare-backed shelties down stony steeps — climbing trees to the slenderest twig on which bird could build, and up the tooth-of-time-indented sides of old castles after wallflowers and starlings—being run away with in carts by colts against turnpike gates—buying bad ballads from young gypsy-girls, who, on receiving a sixpence, give ever so many kisses in return, saying, 'Take your change out of that';—on a borrowed, broken-knee'd pony, with a switch-tail—a devil for galloping—not only attending the country races for a saddle and collar, but entering for and winning the prize—dancing like a devil in barns at kirns—seeing his blooming partner home over the blooming heather, most perilous adventure of all in which virgin-puberty can be involved—fighting with a rival in corduroy breeches, and poll shorn beneath a caup, till his eyes just twinkle through the swollen blue—and, to conclude 'this strange eventful history,' once brought home at one o'clock in the morning, God knows whence or by whom, and found by the shrieking servant, sent out to listen for him in the moonlight, dead-drunk on the gravel at the gate!"[1]

The serious-minded must surely have received a sad shock from Mr. North's audacious attempt to undermine the morals of the nation!

The second of the Blackwood trio, and Wilson's co-equal in importance, was John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854),[2] the son of the Rev. John Lockhart, minister of Cambusnethan. That his pedigree was long and his blood "gentle" were facts of which Lockhart was sometimes even too conscious; and the tendency to sneer at an opponent as his inferior in birth and breeding — which was all very well in a provincial notary's son like Voltaire—is perhaps the only really serious failing in his methods of conducting controversy. After

[1] From *Christopher in His Sporting Jacket*, in *Works*, vol. ix. p. 15.

[2] *Life and Letters*, by A. Lang, 2 vols., 1896. Article in *Quarterly Review*, by G. R. Gleig, October, 1864. See also Saintsbury, in *Essays in English Literature*, 1890.

being at the Glasgow High School and Glasgow College, Lockhart proceeded to Balliol upon the Snell exhibition at the age of fourteen; and he quitted Oxford five years later, having obtained a "first" in the schools. While at Balliol he became a close friend of Sir William Hamilton, but their intimacy was broken off in after years, owing to some unfortunate difference, in all probability political. Lockhart's destination in life was the Scottish bar, and a portion of the interval which elapsed before his safe arrival there in 1816 was passed in an expedition to Germany, the funds for which were generously supplied by William Blackwood on the faith of a promised translation of Schlegel's *History of Literature*. This trip or "jaunt" marks an important stage in Lockhart's intellectual development; and to it we owe the introduction of the imaginary German contributors[1] to the earlier volumes of *Blackwood's Magazine*, from whom Carlyle (always a friend and admirer of Lockhart's) may not have disdained to borrow a hint.[2]

Lockhart never made much of his nominal profession. He possessed no gift of speech, and was afflicted with a dulness of hearing which, no doubt, accentuated the "hidalgo airs" which he was accused of assuming in his intercourse with his fellow-men. Like Wilson, then, he betook himself to literature; like Wilson he found his opportunity in *Maga*; and, having a notorious turn for satire, he was credited with more than his fair share of the "laughing and lashing" which

[1] Here is one of the most elaborate of the titles of bogus-books which *Maga* professed to review: "Urstoffe der Allgemeine Sparsamkeit, oder Einleitung zur Edlere Wissenschaft der Aschensiebungslehre. Von Professor Gunthred Bumgroschen. Leipsig: Bei Wolfgang Dummkopf und Sohn. November, 1822." This is quite in the Carlylean vein.

[2] Another *Edinburgh* and *Blackwood* man, who began his career with translations from the German, was George Moir (1800–70). He contributed the treatises on *Poetry* and *Modern Romance* to the 7th ed. of the *Britannica*, and these were republished along with a similar article on *Rhetoric*, by William Spalding, in 1839. Moir's taste was refined and discriminating, and his style graceful and correct.

so scandalised the Whigs. There was no trace in Lockhart's literary or personal manner of that virtue, so dear, when possessed by other people, to the average Scot, and known as "geniality." He was reserved and proud; he made no secret of his aversions, which were tolerably strong; and hence he has had to do penance in reputation for the faults of others, as well as for his own. As a practitioner in "the gentle art of making enemies" Lockhart excelled. You instinctively feel that he was not a man to be trifled with, and that he was exceptionally well fitted to "take care of himself." His native gift of insolence has, in truth, seldom been surpassed, nor did he scruple to employ it freely if he thought the occasion suitable. But whatever misdeeds may be laid to his account, at least he was never guilty of anything approaching in magnitude to the three *faux pas* of Wilson: the attacks on Coleridge (1817), Wordsworth (1825), and Scott (1829).

In 1820 Lockhart married Scott's eldest daughter, and five years later, to Southey's intense disgust, he became editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and moved to London. His duties in Albemarle Street prevented him from adding to the novels he had already published, to wit, *Valerius* (1821), *Adam Blair* (1822), *Reginald Dalton* (1823), and *Matthew Wald* (1824). But he found time for an admirable *Life of Burns* (1828), and for an abridgement of his father-in-law's *Life of Napoleon* (1829). The greater part of the next decade was devoted to the composition of the *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1837–8), and thenceforth no great work came from Lockhart's pen. He wrote frequently for the *Quarterly* during his editorship, and every now and then would send Blackwood a *Noctes*. The notice of Theodore Hook has alone among his *Quarterly* contributions been reprinted; and, exceptionally high as is the standard of the others, his theory of the reviewer's craft, which he systematically carried into practice, would probably preclude the chance of any selection from them making an effective

or popular book. In Lockhart's opinion, it is the business of a reviewer to review, and not to use the title of a book as a mere peg on which to hang an independent essay.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater dissimilarity than that which existed between Wilson and Lockhart; as in external appearance, so in temperament and idiosyncrasy. They represent two essential distinct, and even conflicting, types of mind; and one need make no scruple about owning that the Lockhart type is, in one's own view, of a much higher order than the Wilson. What Wilson was like, I have already attempted to indicate; and in almost everything his friend and colleague was his antithesis. Lockhart had no "brusts" of eloquence; his intellect partook of the classical calmness and repose to which the Professor's was a stranger. Wilson, to employ a not wholly novel metaphor, wielded the bludgeon with astonishing energy; but a thrust from Lockhart's keen and polished rapier caused much more exquisite agony, and inflicted a much more deadly wound. A single sneering sentence of Lockhart's was harder to bear than a torrent of obloquy from the other. Lockhart's scholarship was the more accurate and profound; his taste the more fastidious and refined; and both scholarship and taste, combined with temperament, find their expression in a singularly well-finished and beautiful style. Fire and warmth may be lacking; *bogus*-fire and *bogus*-warmth most certainly are; but his statuesque and finely-chiselled sentences are models of good English, and when an irrepressible strain of tender emotion penetrates the barrier of habitual reticence and self-restraint, the effect is indescribably touching and impressive.

Lockhart's first original work was *Peter's Letters*[1] which had been heralded by some preliminary flourishes in *Blackwood*, and which created almost as great a sensation as the *Chaldee*

[1] *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., Edin., 1819. There never was a first edition.

Manuscript. It professes to consist of letters written to his friends in Wales by a certain Dr. Peter Morris, who has come to Scotland on a tour ; and the Doctor is made the vehicle of a great deal of extremely free, pungent, and even personal, criticism of the most prominent men in Edinburgh. Every profession yields up its victims ; the distinctive peculiarities of advocates, professors, and ministers are minutely and candidly described ; and commentary sometimes follows them from the forum or the pulpit into the privacy of their own homes. One passage which gave particular umbrage to the Whigs was the description of an imaginary dinner at Craigcrook, at which all the guests, including the most solemn and dignified *Edinburgh* reviewers, are represented as enjoying the diversion of leaping over a stick. We cannot imagine such a publication as *Peter's Letters* appearing in our own day. But at this distance or time we can hardly be too grateful for so bold and skilful a picture of the social life of the age in Scotland. The book is far from being composed of mere *persiflage*. It abounds in valuable and solid reflections on manners and institutions, and for a man of five-and-twenty it must be owned that Lockhart's comments and remarks are surprisingly sagacious and mature. Yet the salt of the work is the satire ; and during his residence in Glasgow before passing at the bar, as well as his residence in Edinburgh after, Lockhart had acquired ample material for indulging his propensity to raillery. The sting of the scorpion must have been painful to those who were its objects ; but for posterity it "kitchens" the dish to an astonishing degree of piquancy. There were few classes of his countrymen of whom Lockhart had not some knowledge, and the following brief excerpt from one of the chapters on the General Assembly will show that he could turn his knowledge to good account :—

"Those [*i.e.*, the gentlemen in black coats] seem, in passing along, to be chiefly occupied in recognising and shaking hands with each other—and sometimes with old acquaintances among the

citizens of the place. Their greetings seem to be given and returned with a degree of heartiness and satisfaction which inspires a favourable idea of all parties concerned. I observed only this minute a thin, hardy-looking minister, in a blue spencer over his sables, arrested immediately under my window by a jolly-looking burgher, who, to judge by his obesity, may probably be in the magistracy, or council at least. 'Hoo d'ye do, Mr. Such-a-thing?' said the cit (for I could not help lifting the glass an inch or two), 'and hoo did ye leave all at Auchtertirloch Manse? You must come and take your broth with us.' To which the man in black replies, with a clerical blandness of modulation, 'Most certainly, you are exceedingly good; and hoo fares it with your good leddy? You have lately had an addition to your family.' 'I understand from a friend in the North,' cries the other, 'that you are not behind me in that particular—twins, Doctor! O, the luck of a manse!' A loud cachinnation follows from both parties, and after a bow and a scrape—'You will remember four o'clock on Tuesday, Dr. Macalpine.'

"In the course of an hour or two, I have had an opportunity of witnessing several other encounters of the same kind, and I feel a sort of contemplative pleasure in looking upon them, as so many fortuitous idyllia presenting themselves amidst the common thoroughfare of the streets. I saw, among the rest, one huge ecclesiastical figure, of an apoplectic and lethargic aspect, moving slowly along, with his eyes goggling in his head, and his tongue hanging out of his mouth. He was accosted by an old lawyer, whom I had often remarked in the Parliament House, and seemed to delight in reviving their juvenile remembrances by using the broadest Scots dialect. Among other observations I heard, 'Hech man! I never think the yill so good noo as when we war young'—and after some further interchange of sentiments, 'You would hear that auld George Piper had pappit aff,' &c., &c., &c. But I see Mr. Wastle's old yellow chariot at the door—and besides, my fingers won't serve me for a longer epistle."[1]

Lockhart suffered from acute fits of compunction for his "escapades" in *Blackwood*, with which, of course, *Peter's Letters* were closely connected. He had a prolonged attack of depression after Christie's duel with John Scott, and another

[1] From *Peter's Letters*, vol. iii., p. 6. How excellent, by the bye, is the description of one of the characters in *Adam Blair* as "one of that numerous division of the human species which may be shortly and accurately described as answering to the name of Captain Campbell"!

after the death of his wife. But remorse was not, I think, his feeling in calmer moments; for to *Maga* he always returned, even after Mr. Murray had taken him away from Edinburgh. Few literary men, when they come to middle life, can find nothing to regret in their youthful performances. But Lockhart had little to be seriously ashamed of; and nothing which ('bating the article of ability) could not be paralleled in the journalism of the other side. He had his fling; he enjoyed it; and but for his experience on *Blackwood* we may well doubt whether, at the not very ripe age of thirty-one, he would have been invited to fill so honourable and lucrative a post as that of editor of the *Quarterly Review*. The detestation of the Whigs was not a very formidable *per contra* in the account.

A rapid glance through the first dozen volumes of *Blackwood's Magazine* is sufficient to disclose a large mass of verse both grave and gay in every kind of metre, in which it is impossible to doubt that Lockhart had a considerable hand. Ease is not one of the characteristics of his prose; but his facility in versification was exceptional, and there is a sense of mastery in his handling of every measure from the simple to the elaborate. Nor is his ingenuity in rhyme less remarkable, as a screed of many verses bears witness, in every one of which he invents a new rhyme to "Blackwood," not a very manageable word for rhyming purposes. In some of his more ambitious flights his achievement hardly answers his effort. The poem on *Napoleon*[1] for example, though by no means amiss, is not all that, considering the subject, it might have been. Nor are the graver passages of *The Mad Banker of Amsterdam*, in the *Don Juan* stanza, so successful as the jocular ones. Here is one of the latter:—

> "They're pleased to call themselves *The Dilettanti*,
> The President's the first I chanced to show 'em;
> He writes more malagrugrously than Dante,
> The City of the Plague's a shocking poem;

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, July, 1821.

But yet he is a spirit light and jaunty,
And jocular enough to those who know him.
To tell the truth, I think John Wilson shines
More o'er a bowl of punch than in his lines." [1]

But by far his finest performance in humorous poetry, with an undercurrent of pathos, is the inimitable *Captain Paton's Lament*, for a few verses of which room must be found :—

" Touch once more a sober measure, and let punch and tears be shed,
For a prince of good old fellows, that, alack-a-day ! is dead ;
For a prince of worthy fellows, and a pretty man also,
That has left the Saltmarket in sorrow, grief, and wo.
Oh ! we ne'er shall see the like of Captain Paton no mo !

. . . . . .

Now and then upon a Sunday he invited me to dine,
On a herring and a mutton chop, which his maid dressed very fine ;
There was also a little Malmsey and a bottle of Bordeaux,
Which between me and the Captain passed nimbly to and fro.
Oh ! I ne'er shall take pot-luck with Captain Paton no mo !

Or if a bowl was mentioned, the Captain he would ring,
And bid Nellie run to the West Port and a stoup of water bring ;
Then he would mix the genuine stuff as they made it long ago,
With limes that on his property in Trinidad did grow.
Oh ! we ne'er shall see the like of Captain Paton's punch no mo !

. . . . . .

But at last the Captain sickened, and grew worse from day to day,
And all missed him in the coffee-room from which now he stayed away ;
On Sabbaths, too, the Wee Kirk made a melancholy show,
All for wanting of the presence of our venerable beau.
Oh ! we ne'er shall see the like of Captain Paton no mo !

[1] The verse about Lockhart as to which Mrs. Gordon tells a story contradicted by Gleig will be found in Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, vol. i. p. 329.

And in spite of all that Cleghorn and Corkindale could do,
It was plain from twenty symptoms that death was in his view ;
So the Captain made his test'ment and submitted to his foe,
And we layed him by the Rams-horn-kirk—'tis the way we all must go.
O ! we ne'er shall see the like of Captain Paton no mo !" [1]

Some of the poems collected and published in the *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (1823) originally appeared in the *Magazine*, and it was this volume which first of all made the public take Lockhart seriously as a man of letters. They deservedly enjoyed enough currency to make two *Blackwood* men of a later generation parody them in the *Bon Gaultier Ballads*, and though they are comparatively neglected now save by the student (as a vast deal of good literature is), they possess at their best that combination of perfection of form with fervour and sincerity of sentiment by which poetry ought to be distinguished. *The Song of the Galley* and that of *The Wandering Knight* are conspicuous instances of what Lockhart could accomplish in this field. He surpassed himself, however, in the exquisite verses, "When youthful faith has fled," [2] some of which he had sent to Carlyle in an hour of bereavement, and which probably represent the innermost thoughts of his soul more openly than anything else he wrote, except a sentence or two, here and there, in the *Life of Scott*.

For his novels Lockhart was liberally paid, but they never really caught the public fancy. *Valerius* has, perhaps, been something "lightlied" by the critics. It is true that, with reminiscences of Becker's *Gallus* comparatively fresh in our minds, we approach with some misgiving a novel of Roman life and manners. But *Valerius* is far from justifying such natural apprehensions, being by no means pedantic, but, on the contrary, surprisingly fresh and spirited. Boto, the British slave, who accompanies his master to Rome, is capital fun, and

[1] From *Blackwood's Magazine*, September, 1819.
[2] See Mr. Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, ii. 398.

so is the "led" stoic philosopher. *Reginald Dalton*, it is generally agreed, would be of little interest but for the pictures it contains of life at Oxford, and there seems no reason to dissent from the accepted view, unless we put in a word for Mackenzie, the writer to the signet, whose appearance at a fashionable *déjeuner* is amusing enough. There is a similar consensus of opinion, which again may be admitted to be well founded, to the effect that *Some Passages in the Life of Mr. Adam Blair* contains Lockhart's finest work in fiction. It is curious that in an age like our own which pretends to like the delineation of "passion" and remorse, a work in which that theme is so superlatively well handled, should not have been resuscitated. But, no doubt, Lockhart's correct and beautiful English stands in the way. *Matthew Wald*, which, as Mr. Lang points out, is also "powerful," in the cant sense of the term, is a manifestly inferior, as well as a more diffuse, production.

It was in his *Life of Burns* that Lockhart first essayed the form of prose writing in which he was destined to win immortality. Different as it is in scale from the *Life of Scott*, we cannot reasonably doubt that its composition taught Lockhart many lessons of great value to a biographer. Certainly when he came to his great task, he proved that he had little to learn in his craft. There was already in existence a specimen of biography on an extended plan, which had been generally recognised (as it still is) for a masterpiece. Lockhart was careful to frame his work upon an entirely different model; he was alert to disclaim "Boswellising"; and the result of his labours is no less a masterpiece than the other. This is not to deny that the narrative gains in interest when the biographer himself appears upon the stage. It would be indeed a poor biography of which that could not be affirmed. But Lockhart never thrusts himself forward so as to obscure our view of the hero; and no feature in his conduct of the work—not even the masterly character sketches of the two Ballantynes—is more

remarkable than the skilful grouping of the subordinate personages round the protagonist, and the nicely calculated proportion of prominence which is assigned to each of them. As regards Scott himself, it is superfluous to say that the *Life* has none of the peculiarities which we are now so well accustomed to associate with the "official" biography from the pen of a relation. We feel that we are gazing upon the figure of a real man, and not of a stuffed poet and novelist. Yet critics used to complain that Lockhart had been purposely unjust to his father-in-law to enhance his own merit! Lockhart, indeed, makes little secret of his views when they differed from Scott's. The account of the royal visit to Edinburgh in 1822, for example, is written in his best vein of sarcasm, and plainly shows what he thought of the Highland complexion imparted to the ceremonial on that occasion. Also, we may guess that he scarcely shared Scott's sentiments of friendship for Terry. But there it ends, and the famous remark attributed to Rogers may surely be set down as a supreme instance of the imbecility into which malice may decline when it has overshot its mark.

Our first extract shall exhibit one of those beautiful scenes of domestic happiness which Lockhart could portray with so delicate and sympathetic a brush :—

"There [at Chiefswood] my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of newcomers entailed upon all the family except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular

business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to 'take his ease in his inn.' On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate;* and then having made up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston himself—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced—this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr. Rose used to amuse himself by likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas, where 'Monsieur le Comte' and 'Madame la Comtesse' appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our 'Monsieur le Comte' was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

"When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage; and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergussons, to whose table he could bring chance visitors when he pleased, with equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed, it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day whe

there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families (which in fact made but one) should dine at Abbotsford, Huntly Burn, or at Chiefswood ; and at none of them was the party considered quite complete unless it included also Mr. Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle, I believe, as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced, seem to haunt me as I write. With three exceptions they are all gone. Even since the last of these volumes was finished, she whom I may now sadly record as, next to Sir Walter himself, the chief ornament and delight at all those simple meetings—she to whose love I owed my place in them—Scott's eldest daughter, the one of all his children who in countenance, mind, and manners most resembled himself, and who indeed was as like him in all things as a gentle innocent woman can ever be to a great man deeply tried and skilled in the struggles and perplexities of active life—she too is no more. And in the very hour that saw her laid in her grave, the only other female survivor, her dearest friend Margaret Fergusson, breathed her last also. But enough—and more than I intended—I must resume the story of Abbotsford." [1]

Our next shall conduct us to a more jovial company, whose revels are brought before us with incomparable spirit :—

"The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets, *gorgeous ;* an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn, the burley preses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth—

'fill full !
I drink to the general joy of the whole table ! '

This was followed by 'The King ! God bless him !' and second came, 'Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine—I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott with three times three !' All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company with some expressions of warm affection to their host, Mrs. Ballantyne retired ; the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the usual

[1] Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, ch. xxv., ed. 1893, p. 462.

way; and then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended, his eyes solemnly fixed upon vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with 'bated breath,' in the sort of whisper by which a stage conspirator thrills the gallery—'*Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal author of Waverley!*' The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence, and then Ballantyne proceeded—

> 'In his Lord-Burleigh look, serene and serious,
> A something of imposing and mysterious'—

to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world—to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received—and to assure them that the author of Waverley would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted—'the proudest hour of his life,' &c., &c. The cool, demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummery was perfect; and Erskine's attempt at gay *nonchalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscophornio, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that, no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—*The Maid of Lodi*, or perhaps *The Bay of Biscay, oh!* or *The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft*. Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers; old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready for one with the *Moorland Wedding*, or *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut;* and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming romance. 'One chapter—one chapter only'—was the cry. After '*Nay, by 'r Lady, nay,*' and a few more coy shifts, the proof-sheets were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

"The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle, and Queen Caroline, in Richmond Park; and notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say that he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable, and

no wonder that the exulting typographer's '*One bumper more to Fcdediah Cleishbotham*' preceded his parting stave, which was uniformly *The last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham."[1]

Our last shall present the closing scene, as described in Lockhart's memorable and impressive though simple words :—

"As I was dressing on the morning of Monday, the 17th of September, Nicholson came into my room and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm, every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. 'Lockhart,' he said, 'I may have but a moment to speak to you. My dear, be a good man —be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.' He paused, and I said, 'Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?' 'No,' said he, 'don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all.' With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained new leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one p.m. on the 21st of September Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes." No sculptor ever modelled a more majestic image of repose :—*κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστὶ, λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων.*"[2]

The third member of the triumvirate was James Hogg (1770–1835),[3] commonly known as "the Ettrick Shepherd," and pronounced by Ferrier to be the greatest poet, after Burns, that had ever "sprung from the bosom of the people." Hogg's

[1] Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, ch. xli. ed. *cit.* p. 373.

[2] *Ibid.*, ch. lxxxiii., *ed. cit.* p. 753.

[3] *Works*, ed. Thomson, 2 vols., 1865. *Memorials*, by his daughter, Mrs. Garden, 2nd ed., Paisley, 1887 ; Saintsbury, *Essays in English Literature*, 1890.

early life was, in truth, passed in circumstances of the utmost poverty, and, unlike Burns, he had practically no education at all. In course of time, however, his literary attempts, particularly an excellent patriotic song, *Donald Macdonald*, brought him into notice. He made the acquaintance of Scott in connection with the *Border Minstrelsy;* and, if his worldly prosperity was never established upon a solid footing, it was not for want of zealous and powerful friends to render him assistance in the matter of taking and stocking hill farms. The chief flaw in his character was an inherent and egregious vanity of which he owns that he could never divest himself, and it is to be regretted that so common and innocent a failing should have led him to publish his *brochure* on *The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1834), a performance which deservedly provoked the wrath of the hitherto well-disposed and friendly Lockhart.

The precise nature of the Boar's relations with *Blackwood's Magazine* is more difficult to determine than that of either the Leopard's or the Scorpion's. By his own account, of course, he was the "tongue of the trump"; and the prominence assigned to the shepherd in the *Noctes* might seem to bear out this view. There is much of the real Hogg in the *Noctes* beyond question, more, in all probability, than there is of the original "Pulltuski" in "the Odontist." But, if one thing be clear about Hogg, it is that he was easily "drawn," in the slang signification of the word; and the character of the shepherd was used by his two lively young friends, who were extremely fond of the pastime, as a means of "drawing" him in that sense of the word as well as in another.[1] Thus Hogg's feelings were divided between vexation at being held up before the public in an undignified and ridiculous light, and pride at occupying so much space in the most popular periodical of the

[1] It will be remembered that Lockhart, when endeavouring to procure a pension from the Literary Fund for Hogg, protested against his being supposed to be the "boozing buffoon" of the *Noctes*.

day. That he contributed a good deal to the *Magazine* and to the *Noctes* is certain; but where the real shepherd ends and the "idol shepherd" begins it is scarcely possibly to decide.

Hogg was a most prolific author, and his collected writings fill two large and cumbrous volumes, printed in double columns, in which, by the by, does *not* appear his first serious prose work.[1] The novels, such as the *Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1817), and the tales such as those collected under the title of *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1829), contain some good material, but it is not very dexterously used. The one piece of prose fiction from Hogg's pen that is really of any account is *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which appeared anonymously (like Lockhart's and most other novels of that age) in 1824. It is a study in religious fanaticism, or, rather, mania, and the tale is told partly in an editorial narrative, partly by the fanatic himself. This unhappy wretch is advised in all his doings and misdeeds by a mysterious counsellor, whose identity it is not difficult to trace for any one who recollects his Wodrow. The style is so much superior to Hogg's ordinary prose, and the character of the hero so well and consistently sustained, that some have suspected the work to be Lockhart's. But there is no external evidence to contradict tradition, and internal evidence on a point of this sort is notoriously dangerous to trust to. Meanwhile, I extract a passage which may help to give some notion of the character of the hero's "illustrious friend":—

"For several days the subject of Mr. Blanchard's doubts and doctrines formed the theme of our discourse. My friend deprecated them most devoutly; and then again he would deplore them, and lament the great evil that such a man might do among the human race. I joined with him in allowing the evil in its fullest

[1] *The Shepherd's Guide; being a practical treatise on the diseases of sheep, their causes, and the best means of preventing them; with observations on the most suitable farm stocking for the various climates of this country*, Edin., 1807.

latitude ; and at length, after he thought he had fully prepared my nature for such a trial of its powers and abilities, he proposed calmly that we two should make away with Mr. Blanchard. I was so shocked that my bosom became as it were a void, and the beatings of my heart sounded loud and hollow in it ; my breath cut, and my tongue and palate became dry and speechless. He mocked at my cowardice, and began a-reasoning on the matter with such powerful eloquence, that before we parted I felt fully convinced that it was my bounden duty to slay Mr. Blanchard ; but my will was far, very far from consenting to the deed.

"I spent the following night without sleep, or nearly so ; and the next morning, by the time the sun arose, I was again abroad, and in the company of my illustrious friend. The same subject was resumed, and again he reasoned to the following purport : That supposing me placed at the head of an army of Christian soldiers, all bent on putting down the enemies of the church, would I have any hesitation in destroying and rooting out these enemies ? None surely. Well then, when I saw and was convinced that here was an individual who was doing more detriment to the church of Christ on earth than tens of thousands of such warriors were capable of doing, was it not my duty to cut him off and save the elect ? 'He who would be a champion in the cause of Christ and His Church, my brave young friend,' added he, 'must begin early, and no man can calculate to what an illustrious eminence small beginnings may lead. If the man Blanchard is worthy, he is only changing his situation for a better one ; and if unworthy, it is better that one fall than that a thousand souls perish. Let us be up and doing in our vocations. For me, my resolution is taken ; I have but one great aim in this world, and I never for a moment lose sight of it.'

"I was obliged to admit the force of his reasoning ; for though I cannot from memory repeat his words, his eloquence was of that overpowering nature, that the subtility of other men sunk before it ; and there is also little doubt that the assurance I had that these words were spoken by a great potentate, who could raise me to the highest eminence (provided that I entered into his extensive and decisive measures) assisted mightily in dispelling my youthful scruples and qualms of conscience ; and I thought moreover that, having such a powerful back friend to support me, I hardly needed to be afraid of the consequences. I consented ! But begged a little time to think of it. He said the less one thought of a duty the better ; and we parted.

"But the most singular instance of this wonderful man's power over my mind was, that he had as complete influence over me by

night as by day. All my dreams corresponded exactly with his suggestions; and when he was absent from me, still his arguments sunk deeper in my heart than even when he was present. I dreamed that night of a great triumph obtained, and though the whole scene was but dimly and confusedly defined in my vision, yet the overthrow and death of Mr. Blanchard was the first step by which I attained the eminent station I occupied. Thus, by dreaming of the event by night, and discoursing of it by day, it soon became so familiar to my mind that I almost conceived it as done. It was resolved on: which was the first and greatest victory gained; for there was no difficulty in finding opportunities enow of cutting off a man who, every good day, was to be found walking by himself in private grounds. I went and heard him preach for two days, and in fact I held his tenets little short of blasphemy; they were such as I had never heard before, and his congregation, which was numerous, were turning up their ears and drinking in his doctrines with the utmost delight; for O, they suited their carnal natures and self-sufficiency to a hair! He was actually holding it forth, as a fact, that 'it was every man's own blame if he was not saved!' What horrible misconstruction! And then he was alleging, and trying to prove from nature and reason, that no man ever was guilty of a sinful action, who might not have declined it had he so chosen! 'Wretched controvertist!' thought I to myself an hundred times, 'shall not the sword of the Lord be moved from its place of peace for such presumptuous testimonies as these!'"[1]

Hogg's verse, considerable in bulk, is most unequal in quality. His longest effort is *The Queen's Wake* (1813), the greater part of which is an echo, and not a bad echo, of Scott's octosyllabics:

> "When ceased the minstrel's crazy song
> His heedful glance embraced the throng,"

and so forth: all showing an accurate ear and considerable power of versification. But the gem of the *Queen's Wake* is *Bonny Kilmeny*, perhaps the best thing Hogg ever penned, and almost a justification of his well known boast to Scott, to the effect that whereas Scott was king of the school of chivalry, he (Hogg) was the king of the mountain fairy

[1] *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, p. 201.

school, which, he was good enough to add, "is a far higher one than yours." Ignoring the addition, we may say that Hogg was right in regarding an unusual felicity in handling that branch of the supernatural as his peculiar excellence. In the ballad, or at least the imitation of the old ballad, he was less uniformly successful than industrious. Performances like *Sir David Graeme* or *The Pedlar*, do not inspire enthusiasm: *Gilmanscleugh* is certainly rather better; and, best of all, is *The Witch of Fife* in the *Queen's Wake*. But the finest of his ballads is inferior to his good lyrics,[1] and the best of his lyrics are those in which the humorous element is given fair play. *Cam' ye by Athole* is doubtless first-rate, and moreover is curious as showing how this borderer of borderers had swallowed the Highland-Jacobite legend, which Scott had dressed up with such amazing skill. But we suspect that we get more of the genuine shepherd, and catch more of the ring of sincerity in either of the songs from which the following verses are extracted:—

"Come all ye jolly shepherds
That whistle through the glen,
I'll tell ye of a secret
That courtiers dinna ken;
What is the greatest bliss
That the tongue o' man can name?
'Tis to woo a bonny lassie
When the kye comes hame.
When the kye comes hame,
When the kye comes hame
'Tween the gloaming and the mirk
When the kye comes hame.

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[1] *The Mountain Bard*, 1807, 3rd ed. with Memoir, 1821, *The Forest Minstrel*, 1810, and *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, 1819–21, contain, with other matter, his chief songs. The last named is an extraordinary, but most interesting, specimen of the art, traditional in the Scottish minstrel's trade, of "vamping."

'Tis not beneath the coronet,
Nor canopy of state,
'Tis not on couch of velvet,
Nor arbour of the great—
'Tis beneath the spreading birk,
In the glen without the name,
Wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame.
When the kye comes hame, &c.

There the blackbird bigs his nest
For the mate he lo'es to see,
And on the topmost bough,
Oh, a happy bird is he;
Where he pours his melting ditty,
And love is a' the theme,
And he'll woo his bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame,
When the kye comes hame, &c." [1]

"I lately lived in quiet ease
An' never wished to marry, O;
But when I saw my Peggy's face,
I felt a sad quandary, O.
Though wild as ony Athol deer,
She has trepanned me fairly, O,
Her cherry cheeks an' een sae clear
Torment me late an' early, O.
O, love, love, love!
Love is like a dizziness!
It wanna let a poor body
Gang about his business!

Were Peggy's love to hire the job,
An' save my heart frae breaking, O,
I'd put a girdle round the globe,
Or dive in Corryvrekin, O;
Or howk a grave at midnight dark,
In yonder vault sae eerie, O;
Or gang an' spier for Mungo Park
Through Africa sae dreary, O.
O love, love, love! &c.

[1] From *When the Kye comes hame.*

Nae man can tell what pains I prove,
Or how severe my pliskie, O ;
I swear I'm sairer drunk wi' love,
Than e'er I was wi' whisky, O.
For love has raked me fore an' aft,
I scarce can lift a leggie, O ;
I first grew dizzy, then gaed daft,
An' soon I'll dee for Peggy, O.
O, love, love, love ! &c." [1]

Of the *Magazine* in later years we shall have to say something in connection with Aytoun. Of the *Magazine* to-day, it is superfluous to say anything. It is there to speak for itself.

The Edinburgh Review, then, and *Blackwood's Magazine* were the pioneers of that periodical literature in Great Britain which has now swollen to such extraordinary dimensions. They grew out of the periodical literature which preceded them, and retained for some time one or two of the features which distinguished reviews and magazines at a time when there was no daily press, and when the weekly newspaper was expensive and jejune. But they were infinitely superior to any of their predecessors ; they cemented if they did not create the bond between the better class of journalism and literature ; and they served at once to stimulate and satisfy an intellectual curiosity among the educated classes at least as strong as any that exists at the present day.

But while they met the requirements of an important section of the public, there was another, growing in consequence as well as in numbers, which had no less eager an appetite for information and entertainment, though it could not afford half-a-crown a month, or six shillings a quarter, to gratify its passion. This fact, as we have seen, had been realised by Constable, though circumstances had prevented his taking advantage of it. Numerous ventures had been set on foot both in Edinburgh and elsewhere, during the earlier years

[1] From *Love is like a Dizziness.*

of the century, to cater for the mental needs of this class. The most successful of those was probably *The Cheap Magazine* (1813), which, at the price of fourpence, is said to have had at one time a circulation of 20,000 a month. Its founder was George Miller,[1] a bookseller and printer in Haddington, who also published *The Monthly Monitor*, and who may be considered as the pioneer of popular literature in Scotland.

But the most celebrated names in this connection are those of William Chambers (1800–83) and his younger brother Robert (1802–71).[2] Of the two, William had the better head for business, and Robert the better head for literature. The pair in alliance formed a powerful combination, and the firm they founded deservedly enjoyed, as it still continues to do in the third generation, great prosperity. Robert Chambers began his career by opening a bookstall in Leith Walk, and by the time he was twenty, had published his *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley* (1822). In rapid succession he produced his *Traditions of Edinburgh* (1823), a *History of the Rebellion of* 1745 (1828), and a collection of *Scottish Ballads and Songs* (1829). His pen was never idle, and whatever he wrote was a happy mixture of the *utile* and the *dulce*. His *Domestic Annals of Scotland* (1859–61) and his *Book of Days* (1862–64) were at one time to be met with in every Scottish household; while the *Encyclopædia* of the firm, as well as its *Cyclopædia of English Literature* (of which a new edition is at present in the course of appearing), have attained even wider celebrity. Robert Chambers's *chef d'œuvre*, however, was his anonymous *Vestiges of the Natural History of the Creation* (1844), which in some sort paved the way for the reception of the Darwinian theory of the origin of species, and

[1] His son, James Miller (1792-1865), continued his father's business for some years, and wrote a well-known work on the history of the county, entitled *The Lamp of Lothian* (Haddington, 1844). See *Dundee Advertiser*, May 2, 1901, and *Glasgow Herald*, April 11, 1903.

[2] See William Chambers, *Memoir of William and Robert Chambers*, 1872, 13th ed. 1884, for an account of their early struggles.

whose merits were recognised by Mr. Darwin himself. The secret of the authorship, though often suspected, was not disclosed until after William's death.

In 1832, the two brothers founded *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* at the price of 1½d. a week, at which it commanded what was then considered an enormous sale. It must be owned that for many years the journal had little more than a bowing acquaintance with literature in the higher sense of the term. Its tone was of the "Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" kind, and though some authors who subsequently attained fame were allowed to try their 'prentice hand on its readers, no very noteworthy work was given to the public through its intervention. The editorship of James Payn (whose *Lost Sir Massingbird* had appeared in its pages) was one perpetual struggle between the literary instinct, as represented by him, and the business instinct, as represented by William Chambers. It is needless to say which prevailed, but, in more recent years, the literary quality of the contents of the *Journal* has much improved. Instead of descending to the level of its competitors—more numerous and formidable than of yore—it has raised its standard, and, without sacrificing any of the characteristic features which endeared it to its old *clientèle*, has added new ones which appear to be appreciated by its readers at least as much as interviews with actresses and aeronauts, or zincophotographic reproductions of diseased turnips.

CHAPTER X

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: 1801–48

THE opening decade of the nineteenth century is remarkable in the literature of Scotland, not only for the phenomena to which we have already adverted, but also, for the first appearance of the female author in prose. England had had her Behn, her Haywood, her Macaulay, her Hannah More, her Mrs. Radcliffe; but Scotland had hitherto wanted for any worthy representative of their sex except in verse.[1] The deficiency was now to be supplied by several ladies, of whom the earliest comer was Anne M'Vicar (1755–1838), better known as Mrs. Grant "of Laggan,"[2] that being the parish of which her husband was for some time minister. Born in Glasgow, she naturally followed her father when military duties called him to Fort Augustus, whence she wrote to a friend those *Letters from the Mountains* which were collected and published in 1806.[3] This was not her first attempt in literature, a volume of *Poems* having preceded it by three years.

[1] Mackenzie seldom or never animadverts in the *Mirror* or the *Lounger* on female pedants and blue-stockings. Whence we may infer, not so much that he liked them, as that they were not very numerous in general society.

[2] *Memoirs and Correspondence*, ed. Grant, 3 vols., 1844.

[3] Sixth ed., 2 vols., 1845.

But it is the *Letters* which in some sort preserve her name, and which do her abilities most credit.

We need not suppose that this correspondence was "touched up" or altered to any serious extent before being sent to press. Personal allusions which might cause needless pain were suppressed; but otherwise there is nothing to suggest that the letters were not originally written much as they are printed. They contain a good deal about the Highlands and their inhabitants which, to the reader of that day, was doubtless novel and curious. But to a later generation their importance would appear to consist wholly in the unconscious revelation of the author's personality. Miss M'Vicar was probably not very different from any other young lady of the period, except in so far as she possessed unusual intelligence; and it is interesting to watch the schoolgirl, with her rhapsodies of enthusiasm, gradually merging in the mature and experienced matron. The dash of "sensibility" which no self-respecting young woman of her generation could have afforded to dispense with, she never wholly lost; but it was qualified by close observation, a considerable power of judging character, and a sufficiency of common sense. She did not take kindly to new "movements" and crazes, and her comments on Mrs. Shelley's *Vindication* illustrate aptly enough her shrewdness and her gift of vigorous expression. "Nothing," she says, "can be more specious and plausible, for nothing can delight Misses more than to tell them they are as wise as their masters. Though, after all, they will in every emergency be like Trinculo in the storm when he crept under Caliban's gaberdine for shelter."[1] We may also remember her comparison of Scott and his wife to the burning-glass, which is unaffected by the rays of the sun, and the bit of paper beside it, which presently bursts into a blaze.[2]

Elizabeth Hamilton (1758–1816), though no more than three years younger than Mrs. Grant, found a medium for

[1] *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 66. [2] Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, ed. 1893, p. 154.

expressing her ideas in the novel. She was strongly imbued with that optimistic belief in the possibility of an appreciable and speedy amelioration in the human race which the experience of another century has led most people to question. In 1813 she published *A series of popular Essays illustrative of Principles essentially connected with the Improvement of the Understanding, the Imagination, and the Heart.* But, five years before, she had ventilated in another shape her views upon a practical branch of reform which had for long been neglected in Scotland. *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) contains an admirably realistic picture of the "through-other" Scots family of the small-farmer class, whose motto is, "the clartier, the cosier," and whose presence in the village of to-day is much less frequently indicated by external signs than it was a century ago. That the M'Clarty household is, in the long run, redeemed from unnecessary dirt and squalor was probably to the writer the cardinal feature in the book; but it is in their unregenerate state that they awaken the interest of the modern reader. Less consciously and avowedly philanthropic, but no less fundamentally good and amiable than Miss Hamilton, was Mary Brunton (1773–1818),[1] a Balfour from Orkney by birth, and consort by marriage of Dr. Brunton, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Edinburgh. Her life was uneventful; and of her character and tastes we know no more than what a memoir, prefixed to a posthumous fragment of her work, vouchsafes to tell us. Thence we learn that the demonstration by *reductio ad absurdum* was highly distasteful to her, and that "her ear was peculiarly gratified by the music of Dr. Robertson's style." Her own is not distinguished, though enlivened here and there by strokes of quiet and unobtrusive humour, like the remark: "Finding it impossible to derive from himself or his ancestors sufficient consequence to satisfy his desires, he was obliged to draw for means upon posterity by becoming the founder of a family." *Self-control* was published

[1] See an article in the *National Observer*, March 31, 1894.

in 1811, and *Discipline* in 1814. Both attained a fair measure of success; but the latter, in which there was an attempt to portray Highland manners, was eclipsed by *Waverley*. Mrs. Brunton's good people are prigs, and her bad people outrageously villanous. Yet *Emmeline*, which appeared in 1819, holds out a promise of better things, which, had the writer been spared, might have raised her to a higher position than she actually occupies in the rank of novelists.

Far superior to either Miss Hamilton or Mrs. Brunton was Susan Edmonstone Ferrier (1782–1854),[1] the Scottish member of an illustrious trio to which Ireland supplied Miss Edgeworth and England supplied Miss Austen. There is little of moment in her private life to note: the account given by Lockhart[2] of her visit to Abbotsford in 1831 conveys as favourable an idea of an essentially sterling and excellent nature as any other recorded episode.

Miss Ferrier was the author of three novels: *Marriage* (1818), *The Inheritance* (1824), and *Destiny* (1831). They all possess much the same merits and much the same defects. The plots are neither plausible nor interesting. There are long hortatory digressions, in which the views of contemporary evangelicalism are enforced with more zeal than discretion. The heroes and heroines are insipid and unattractive. Mr. Lyndsay, the good angel of *The Inheritance*, is, frankly, a bore: the sort of bore who predicts that "the profane and licentious works of Lord B. will live only in the minds of the profane and impure, and will soon be classed among other worthless dross," whereas his other writings will be treasured by posterity. Not a very happy effort in vaticination, one may note, though professional critics have often gone as far astray as this amateur. Colonel Delmour, the man of *ton*, who trifles with the heroine's affections, is conventional and incredible; so is Lewiston, the

[1] Miss Ferrier's works were reprinted in 6 vols. (Bentley) 1882, and (Dent) 1894. See also *Memoir and Correspondence*, ed. Doyle, 1898.

[2] *Life of Scott*, ed. *cit.*, 724.

heavy villain of the piece. But all these features may be eliminated, and yet leave a large balance of substantial excellences in Miss Ferrier's favour ; the faculty of keen observation, and a gift of satirical and unsparing humour in handling almost all classes of her countrymen, but especially those of the lower middle order who have a decided tinge of vulgarity.

We do not mean that her pictures of high society are bad. Lord Rossville is very nearly perfect, and the fine ladies and gentlemen for whom Dr. Redgill prescribes in *Marriage* are far superior to those of the average novelist. In a somewhat lower rank of life, again, old Glenfern, with his three sisters and his five rubicund daughters, is admirable : a picture of the old-fashioned laird of small means and homely manners, who flourished in Scotland during the eighteenth century. The Misses Jacky, Nicky, and Grizzy Douglas, indeed, are almost as far beyond praise as the incomparable Miss Pratt, with her incessant talk of Anthony Whyte. But it is when she gets down to an inferior stratum of society still, that Miss Ferrier is seen in her most characteristic mood. She positively revels in depicting the affectations of the would-be genteel ; and their speech and modes of thought are reproduced with so essential a fidelity that her sketches are as true to life to-day as they were eighty years ago. Here, no doubt, we become sensible of the defects of Miss Ferrier's quality. She "takes sides" too openly. Infinitely more brilliant, though no less didactic, than Miss Edgeworth, she has none of the serene impartiality of Miss Austen. The sun, if she had her way, would no longer shine on the just and the unjust. The objectionable personages must be "warmed up to rights," and her treatment of them is like nothing more than the treatment of a rat by a terrier, so unmercifully are the luckless wretches used. Every detail in the matter of personal appearance and environment—and Miss Ferrier's command of detail was almost as great as that of Smollett or Dickens—is pressed into the service against them, and nothing is omitted which can assist in holding up

the offending character to ridicule and contempt. Every now and then there is no venom on the weapon ; Mrs. Goodwilly's excellent letter to Miss Becky Duguid is free from malice *prepense*. But personal animosity is the note of many of her best passages, and what is really to be admired is the accuracy of aim with which that somewhat unmanageable passion is usually directed. Take this excerpt from the account of the Fairbairn *ménage* :—

"The children of this happy family always dined at table, and their food and manner of eating were the only subjects of conversation. Alexander did not like mashed potatoes, and Andrew Waddell could not eat broth, and Eliza could live upon fish, and William Pitt took too much small beer, and Henry ate as much meat as his papa ; and all these peculiarities had descended to them from some one or other of their ancestors. The dinner was simple on account of the children, and there was no dessert, as Bobby did not agree with fruit. But to make amends, Eliza's sampler was shown, and Henry and Alexander's copy-books were handed round the table, and Andrew Waddell stood up and repeated, 'My name is Norval,' from beginning to end, and William Pitt was prevailed upon to sing the whole of 'God save the King,' in a little squeaking mealy voice, and was bravoed and applauded, as though he had been Braham himself." [1]

First rate, must be the verdict, of its kind ; but perhaps a little cruel. No man could have barbed the dart so cunningly.

Miss Ferrier's triumphs in her own method of character painting are probably the Rev. Duncan M'Dow, in *Destiny*, and the Black family in *The Inheritance*. The spice of vindictiveness, and the consequent exaggeration, in the minister are beyond denial. We almost find it in our heart to be sorry for the reverend gentleman, especially when he and "mammaw" take little Marjory Muckle M'Dow to pay an unsolicited visit to Sir Reginald at his Richmond villa. Miss Ferrier got a "cast of grace" at some period or other of her life, and the consequences are apparent in the metaphorical

[1] From *The Inheritance*, ch. xxvii, ed. 1882, i. p. 241.

mauling and pummelling to which this Moderate, who cares more for his "augmentation" than for the spiritual interests of his parishioners, is consistently subjected. A passage from the description of a luncheon-party at the manse will help to show how formidable a person Miss Ferrier must have been to people whom she happened not to like :—

"This sentiment uttered, a grace was hurried over; and the company seated themselves at table, which was literally covered with dishes, all close huddled together. In the middle was a tureen of leek-soup, *alias* cocky-leeky, with prunes; at one end, a large dish of innumerable small clammy fresh-water trouts; at the other, two enormous fat ducks, stuffed to the throat with onions, and decorated with onion rings round their legs and pinions. At the corners were minced collops and tripe, confronted with a dish of large, old peas, drowned (for they could not swim) in butter; next, a mess of mashed potatoes, scored and rescored with the marks of the kitchen-knife—a weapon which is to be found in all kitchens, varying in length from one to three feet; and in uncivilised hands used indiscriminately to cut meat, fish, fowl, onions, bread, and butter. Saucers full of ill-coloured pickles filled up the interstices.

"'I ordered merely a slight refreshment,' said Mr. M'Dow, surveying his banquet with great complacency; 'I think it preferable to a more solid *mail* in this weather. Of all good Scotch dishes, in my opinion, there's none equal to cocky-leeky; as a friend of mine said, it's both nectar and ambrosia. You'll find that uncommonly good, Miss Lucy, if you'll just try it; for it's made by a receipt of my mother's, and she was always famous for cocky-leeky; the prunes are a great improvement; they give a great delicacy to the flavour; my leeks are not come to their full strength yet; but they are extremely sweet; you may help me to a few more of the broth, Captain, and don't spare the leeks. I never see cocky-leeky without thinking of the honest man who found a snail in his: 'Tak' ye that snack, my man,' says he, 'for looking sae like a plum-damy'; hach, hach, ho! There's a roasted hare coming to remove the fish, and I believe you see your refreshment; there's merely a few trifles coming.'

"Lucy had accepted one of Mr. Dugald's muddy little trouts, as the least objectionable article of the repast; and while Mr. M'Dow's mouth was stuffed with prunes and leeks, silence ensued. But having despatched a second plateful, and taken a bumper of wine, he began again, 'I can answer for the ducks, Miss Lucy, if you'll do me

the favour to try them. A clean knife and fork, Jess, to Mr. Dugald to cut them. I prefer ducks to a goose; a goose is an inconvenient sort of bird, for it's rather large for one person, and it's not big enough for two. But my stars, Jess! what *is* the meaning of this? The ducks are perfectly raw!' in an accent of utter despair. 'What *is* the meaning of it? You must take it to the brander and get it done as fast as you can. How came Eppy to go so far wrong, I wonder?'

"Jess here emitted some of her guttural sounds, which, being translated, amounted to this, that the jack had run down, and Eppy couldn't set it going again.

"'That's most ridiculous!' exclaimed Mr. M'Dow, indignantly; 'when I was at the pains to show her myself how to manage her. She's the Auchnagoil jack, which I bought, and a most famous goer. But you see how it is, Miss Lucy; you must make allowance for a bachelor's house—there's a roasted hare coming. Jess, take away the fish and bring the hare to me.' The hare was herewith introduced, and flung, rather than placed, before her master. 'Oh, this is quite intolerable! There's really no bearing this! The hare's burnt to a perfect stick! The whole jice is out of its body!'

"'Your cook's not a good hare-dresser, that's all that can be said,' quoth Mr. Dugald.

"'Very well said—extremely good,' said Mr. M'Dow, trying to laugh off his indignation; 'and after all I believe it's only a little scowthered. Do me the favour to try a morsel of it, Miss Lucy, with a little jeelly. Jess, put down the jeelly. Oh, have you nothing but a pig to put it in?' demanded he, in a most wrathful accent, as Jess clapped down a large native jelly-pot upon the table. 'Where's the handsome cut crystal jeelly-dish I bought at the Auchnagoil roup?'

"Jess's face turned very red, and a downcast look of conscious guilt told that the 'handsome cut crystal jelly-dish' was no more.

"'O, this is really beyond all bearing! quite insufferable!' This was uttered in a tone at once expressive of rage, anguish, and revenge."[1]

Delightful as Mr. M'Dow is, he must, however, yield the *pas* as gracefully as he can, to Miss Bell Black, afterwards Mrs. Major Waddell (the Major, if we mistake not, was a nephew of Waddell of Waddell Mains, and a cousin of Bog of Boghall), in *The Inheritance*. We doubt whether in the whole range of fiction there is a more exquisitely finished study of sheer

[1] *Destiny*, ch. xviii. ed. 1882, i. 147.

vulgarity : even Mrs. Elton must admit a sister to her throne. But to know how good Mrs. Major Waddell is, you must know something of Scotland and of life in the country towns of Scotland. The following extract, which necessities of space have compelled us to retrench, will, it is hoped, convey some notion of this immortal female :—

"'Bless me, Major!' exclaimed the lady in a tone of alarm, 'is it possible that you have been walking? And the roads are quite wet! Why did you not tell me you were going out, and I would have ordered the carriage for you, and have gone with you, although I believe it is the etiquette for a married lady to be at home for some time;' then observing a spot of mud on his boot, 'And you have got your feet quite wet; for Heaven's sake, Major, do go and change your boots directly! I see they are quite wet!'

"The Major looked delighted at this proof of conjugal tenderness, but protested that his feet were quite dry, holding up a foot in appeal to the company.

"'Now, how can you say so, Major, when I see they are quite damp? Do, I entreat you, put them off; it makes me perfectly wretched to think of your sitting with wet feet; you know you have plenty of boots. I made him get a dozen pairs when we were at York, that I might be quite sure of his always having dry feet. Do, my love, let Cæsar help you off with these for any sake!—for my sake, Major. I ask it as a personal favour.'

"This was irresistible; the Major prepared to take the suspected feet out of company with a sort of vague, mixed feeling floating in his brain, which, if it had been put into words, would have been thus rendered—

"'What a happy dog am I to be so tenderly beloved by such a charming girl; and yet what a confounded deal of trouble it is to be obliged to change one's boots every time my wife sees a spot of mud on them!'

"'Now, you won't be long, Major?' cried the lady, as the Major went off, attended by Cæsar. 'The Major is so imprudent, and takes so little care of himself, he really makes me quite wretched; but how do you think he looks?'

. . . . . .

"At that moment the Major entered, with a very red face and a pair of new boots, evidently too tight.

"'You see what it is to be under orders,' said he, pointing to his toes, and trying to smile in the midst of his anguish.

"'It's lucky for you, Major, I'm sure, that you are; for I don't believe there ever was anybody on earth so careless of themselves as you are. What do you think of his handing Lady Fairacre to her carriage yesterday in the midst of the rain, and without his hat, too? But I hope you changed your stockings as well as your boots, Major?'

"'I assure you, upon my honour, my dear, neither of them were the least wet.'

"'Oh! now, Major, you know if you haven't changed your stockings I shall be completely wretched,' cried the lady, all panting with emotion. 'Good gracious! To think of your keeping on your wet stockings—I never knew anything like it!'

"'I assure you, my dear Bell,'—— began the Major.

"'Oh! now, my dearest Major, if you have the least regard for me, I beseech you put off your stockings this instant. Oh! I am certain you've got cold already—how hot you are,' taking his hand; 'and don't you think his colour very high? Now I'm quite wretched about you.'

"In vain did the poor Major vow and protest as to the state of his stockings—it was all in vain; the lady's apprehensions were not to be allayed, and again he had to limp away to pull off boots which the united exertions of himself and Cæsar had with difficulty got on.

"'I really think my wife will be for keeping me in a bandbox,' said he, with a sort of sardonic smile, the offspring of flattered vanity and personal suffering.

. . . . . .

"The poor Major once more made his appearance re-booted, and trying to look easy under the pressure of his *extreme* distress.

"'Now, are you quite sure you changed your stockings, Major? Are you not cheating me? Cæsar, did the Major change his stockings?'

"Cæsar, with a low bow, confirmed the important fact, and that interesting question was at length set at rest."[1]

Again the touch of animosity and exaggeration is obvious; but, again, the tone, the manner, above all, the language, are suggested with consummate success. The speech of the class which, despising the vernacular, has not yet mastered the English idiom, has never been reproduced with half the truth and vivacity of Miss Ferrier.

[1] From *The Inheritance*, ch. xlvii, ed. 1882, i. 413.

The most prolific of the lesser novelists of this period was unquestionably John Galt (1779–1839), a native of Irvine. The sum of his literary production is said to amount to sixty volumes, besides plays and contributions to periodicals; yet he was by way of being a man of commerce rather than of letters. From his early youth he was a great projector, and all his mercantile schemes ended in disaster, which he bore with exemplary fortitude. Canada was the scene of his chief attempt at making a fortune, and many years previously he had cruised on the same errand in the Levant, where he had met Hobhouse and Byron. His biography of the latter has never been very highly esteemed.

Galt, then, had had a larger experience of the world than often falls to clerks in H.M. Customs. But, from the point of view of literature, he turned it to comparatively poor account. None of his novels[1] deserve to be read save those of which the material is what he collected in Ayrshire in his early years, and stored in a singularly retentive memory. Some people have read *Laurie Todd* (1830), and others have read *Ringan Gilhaize* (1823), an historical romance, in which the Covenanters are vindicated from the strictures of Scott. But no one living (so far as I am aware) has ever read *Bogle Corbet* (1831) or *Stanley Buxton* (1832). Of his numerous writings, perhaps the only one which might deservedly be more accessible than it is, is *The Member* (1832), and even that can have no charms for those who despise "ancient history."

Galt's most ambitious effort was his anonymous *Omen* (1825), which was at first (by Scott, amongst others) attributed to Lockhart. Careless, as a rule, about the niceties of style, he obviously took great pains about this book, and polished and

[1] An excellent edition of Galt's best novels is published by Blackwood in 6 vols. (Edin., 1895–97). The same publishers, it is believed, keep *The Omen* in print. *Quoad ultra*, see Galt's *Autobiography*, 2 vols., and the *Memoir* by D. M. Moir ("Delta").

repolished it until, if it were in mortals to command success, success had assuredly been his. Yet, somehow or other, it lacks the breadth of handling and impressiveness of treatment which are present in great works, and absent in works not great. He was, in truth, much more in his element in a miscellany like *The Steamboat*, which purports to recount the adventures of Mr. Duffle, a haberdasher, on his voyage to the coronation, and in which a sketch, entitled *The Wearyfu' Woman*, has attained some celebrity. The masterpiece of the collection, however, as I venture to think, is Mr. Gauze's story of *King Charles and the Witches*.

It was Mr. Blackwood, who, by accepting *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820–21) for his *Magazine*, first encouraged Galt to exercise his talents in the sphere to which they were peculiarly adapted. The thread of plot is thin enough, and the device of indifferent spelling is not very artistically employed. But Dr. Pringle and his wife, together with their daughter and their son, Mr. Andrew, the young advocate, form an excellent group; while the respective recipients of their letters at home —Miss Mally Glencairn, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Micklewham, Miss Isabella Todd, and the rest—are sketched with even greater felicity. In the *Legatees*, as in the *Annals*, we have something of the ecclesiastical flavour which has always been so popular with Scottish humorists; but Galt never, like some of his would-be successors, infuses it with too generous a hand.

The *Annals of the Parish* (1821) had been written three years before the appearance of *Waverley*, and had been refused by Constable as being too Scotch and provincial for the taste of the public. The fashion changed with a vengeance in the ensuing decade, and the success of the *Legatees* induced Galt and his publisher to bring out the work which had for long been lying neglected and forgotten. The *Annals* is, indeed, one of Galt's very finest performances. Its scheme is simple in the extreme, and there is nothing that can be strictly called a plot. Yet the record of Mr. Micah Balwhidder, minister of

the parish of Dalmailing, forms an absolutely delightful narrative. Mr. Balwhidder and his three successive wives are triumphs of character-drawing by means of slight touches, and there is not a personage or an incident in the work which is not germane to the matter. Galt's observation was minute and comprehensive; no *trait* of the lower middle classes of his native land escaped his eye; and thus the story of this country clergyman's fifty years' ministry becomes really an epitome of the social history of Scotland during the reign of George III. We see the change from a squalid and poverty-stricken to a prosperous and busy country proceeding under our eyes; factories, cotton mills, and "works" of every description, spring up in all directions; a new spirit enters into and animates the whole community. As the industrial begins to vie with the agricultural interest, as the operative becomes an equally familiar figure with the ploughman, so the poorer members of the landed class are squeezed out by more prosperous men—by nabobs, or, perhaps, by their heritable creditors. All this is set down in the *Annals of the Parish* with great accuracy and with abounding humour. Mr. Balwhidder is no unworthy match for Dr. Primrose, and his simplicity and "canny" good nature are well illustrated in the following passages:—

"Another thing happened in this year [1795], too remarkable for me not to put on record, as it strangely and strikingly marked the rapid revolutions that were going on. In the month of August, at the time of the fair, a gang of play-actors came, and hired Thomas Thacklan's barn for their enactments. They were the first of that clanjamfrey who had ever been in the parish; and there was a wonderful excitement caused by the rumours concerning them. Their first performance was *Douglas Tragedy* and the *Gentle Shepherd;* and the general opinion was that the lad who played Norval in the play and Patie in the farce was an English lord's son, who had run away from his parents rather than marry an old cracket lady with a great portion. But, whatever truth there might be in this notion, certain it is the whole pack was in a state of perfect beggary; and yet, for all that, they not only in their parts (as I was told) laughed most heartily, and made others

the same,—for I was constrained to let my daughter go to see them, with some of her acquaintances, and she gave me such an account of what they did that I would have liked to have gotten a keek at them myself. At the same time, I must own this was a sinful curiosity, and I stifled it to the best of my ability. Among other plays that they did was one called *Macbeth and the Witches*, which the Miss Cayennes had seen performed in London, when they were there in the winter-time with their father, for three months, seeing the world, after coming from the boarding-school. But it was no more like the true play of Shakespeare the poet, according to their account, than a duddy betherel, set up to fright the sparrows from the peas, is like a living gentleman. The hungry players, instead of behaving like guests at the royal banquet, were voracious on the needful feast of bread, and the strong ale that served for wine in decanters. But the greatest sport of all was about a kail-pot, that acted the part of a caldron, and should have sunk with thunder and lightning into the earth; however, it did quite as well, for it made its exit, as Miss Virginia said, by walking quietly off, being pulled by a string fastened to one of its feet. No scene of the play was so much applauded as this one; and the actor who did the part of King Macbeth made a most polite bow of thankfulness to the audience for the approbation with which they had received the performance of the pot."[1]

"In the course of the summer, just as the roof was closing in of the school-house, my lord came to the castle with a great company, and was not there a day till he sent for me to come over, on the next Sunday, to dine with him. But I sent him word that I could not do so, for it would be a transgression of the Sabbath; which made him send his own gentleman to make his apology for having taken so great a liberty with me, and to beg me to come on the Monday. This I did accordingly, and nothing could be better than the discretion with which I was used. There was a vast company of English ladies and gentlemen, and his lordship, in a most jocose manner, told them all how he had fallen on the midden, and how I had clad him in my clothes, and there was a wonder of laughing and diversion. But the most particular thing in the company was a large round-faced man with a wig, a dignitary in some great Episcopalian church in London, who was extraordinary condescending towards me, drinking wine with me at the table, and

[1] From *Annals of the Parish*, vol. i. p. 212.

saying weighty sentences, in a fine style of language, about the becoming grace of simplicity and innocence of heart in the clergy of all denominations of Christians; which I was pleased to hear, for, really, he had a proud red countenance, and I could not have thought he was so mortified to humility within, had I not heard with what sincerity he delivered himself, and seen how much reverence and attention was paid to him by all present, particularly by my lord's chaplain, who was a pious and pleasant young divine, though educated at Oxford for the Episcopalian persuasion.

"One day soon after, as I was sitting in my closet conning a sermon for the next Sunday, I was surprised by a visit from the dean (as the dignitary was called). He had come, he said, to wait on me as rector of the parish—for so it seems they call a pastor in England—and to say that, if it was agreeable, he would take a family dinner with us before he left the castle. I could make no objection to his kindness; but said that I hoped my lord would come with him, and that we would do our best to entertain them with all suitable hospitality. About an hour or so after he had returned to the castle, one of the flunkeys brought a letter from his lordship, to say that not only he would come with the dean, but that they would bring his other guests with them; and that, as they could only drink London wine, the butler would send me a hamper in the morning, assured (as he was pleased to say) that Mrs. Balwhidder would otherwise provide good cheer.

"This notification, however, was a great trouble to my wife, who was only used to manufacture the produce of our glebe and yard to a profitable purpose, and not used to the treatment of deans and lords, and other persons of quality. However, she was determined to stretch a point on this occasion, and we had, as all present declared, a charming dinner. For fortunately one of the sows had a litter of pigs a few days before, and, in addition to a goose (that is but a boss bird), we had a roasted pig with an apple in its mouth, which was just a curiosity to see. My lord called it a tithe pig; but I told him it was one of Mrs. Balwhidder's own clecking, which saying of mine made no little sport when expounded to the dean.

"But och how! this was the last happy summer that we had for many a year in the parish; and an omen of the dule that ensued was in a sacrilegious theft that a daft woman, Jenny Gaffaw, and her idiot daughter did in the kirk, by tearing off and stealing the green serge lining of my lord's pew to make, as they said, a hap for their shoulders in the cold weather. Saving, however, the sin, we paid no attention at the time to the mischief and tribulation that so unheard-of a trespass boded to us all. It took place about Yule,

when the weather was cold and frosty, and poor Jenny was not very able to go about seeking her meat as usual. The deed, however, was done mainly by her daughter, who, when brought before me, said 'her poor mother's back had mair need of claes than the kirk-boards'; which was so true a thing that I could not punish her, but wrote anent it to my lord, who not only overlooked the offence, but sent orders to the servants at the castle to be kind to the poor woman and the natural, her daughter."[1]

No one not a Scot can adequately appreciate the delicacy of Galt's strokes. It were vain to expect for him the great popularity in England which Scott achieved, despite an unfamiliar dialect, by his merits, and more modern writers have won by their defects.

The following year (1822) produced what is perhaps the best, and also what is certainly the poorest, of all Galt's remembered and readable work. *The Provost* is, as some think, superior even to the *Annals*. Mr. Pawkie, who tells the tale of his own rise to civic honours, is not essentially different in character from Mr. Balwhidder, but what differences there may be between them are dexterously accentuated, and there is no hint of repetition in a work which does for a burgh what the other accomplished for a landward parish. *The Provost* presents us with Scottish municipal life in a nutshell. Here again fashions change, as they were changing even during Mr. Pawkie's official career. But though town councils have been reformed, though the councillors and the guildry no longer vote themselves tacks of the "common good" at a ridiculously low rent, and though the methods of persuasion are much more subtle and much less overt, the spirit and tone of to-day are indistinguishable from those of a century ago. The magistracy of our royal and other burghs abounds with Provost Pawkies in *esse*; the councils are full of them in *posse*; and parallels can doubtless be found without much difficulty for Bailie M'Lucre and Mr. Peevie.

[1] From *Annals of the Parish*, vol. i. p. 98.

The Provost contains some of Galt's best-known episodes, such as the Execution, the "Windy Yule" (a fine piece of description), and the tale of Mr. M'Lucre's visit to London, which is well worth reproducing :—

"'Ye ken weel, Mr. Pawkie, what I did at the 'lection for the member, and how angry ye were yoursel about it, and a' that. But ye were greatly mista'en in thinking that I got ony effectual fee at the time, over and above the honest price of my potatoes, which ye were as free to bid for had ye liket, as either of the candidates. I'll no deny, however, that the nabob, before he left the town, made some small presents to my wife and daughter ; but that was no fault o' mine. Howsever, when a' was o'er, and I could discern that ye were mindet to keep the guildry, I thought, after the wreck o' my provision concern, I might throw mair bread on the water and not find it than by a bit jaunt to London to see how my honourable friend, the nabob, was coming on in his place in parliament, as I saw none of his speeches in the newspaper.

"'Well, ye see, Mr. Pawkie, I ga'ed up to London by a trader from Leith ; and by the use of a gude Scotch tongue, the whilk was the main substance o' a' the bairns' part o' gear that I inherited from my parents, I found out the nabob's dwelling, in the west end o' the town of London ; and, finding out the nabob's dwelling, I went and rappit at the door, which a bardie flunkie opened, and speer't what I wantit, as if I was a thing no fit to be lifted off a midden with a pair of iron tongs. Like master, like man, I thought to myself ; and thereupon, taking heart no to be put out, I replied to the whipper-snapper—"I'm Bailie M'Lucre o' Gudetown, and maun ha'e a word wi' his honour."

"'The cur lowered his birsses at this, and replied in a mair ceeveleezed style of language, "Master is not at home."

"'But I kent what "not at home" means in the morning at a gentleman's door in London ; so I said, "Very weel, as I hae had a long walk, I'll e'en rest myself, and wait till he come" ; and with that, I plumpit down on one of the mahogany chairs in the trance.

"'The lad, seeing that I wasna to be jookit, upon this answered me by saying he would go and inquire if his master would be at home to me ; and the short and the long o't was that I got at last an audience o' my honourable friend.

"'"Well, bailie," said he, "I'm glad to see you in London," and a hantle o' ither courtly glammer that's no worth a repitition ; and, from less to mair, we proceeded to sift into the matter and end of my coming to ask the help o' his hand to get me a post in the

government. But I soon saw that, wi' a' the phraseology that lay at his tongue end during the election, about his power and will to serve us, his ain turn ser't, he cared little for me. Howsever, after some time, and going to him every day, at long and last he got me a tide-waiter's place at the Custom-house—a poor hungry situation, no worth the grassum at a new tack of the warst land in the town's aught.

"'But minnows are better than nae fish, and a tide-waiter's place was a step towards a better, if I could have waited. Luckily, however, for me, a flock of fleets and ships frae the East and West Indies came in a' thegither; and there was sic a stress for tide-waiters that before I was sworn in and tested, I was sent down to a grand ship in the Malabar trade frae China, loaded with tea and other rich commodities, the captain whereof, a discreet man, took me down to the cabin, and gave a dram of wine, and when we were by oursels said to me—

"'"Mr. M'Lucre, what will you take to shut your eyes for an hour?"

"'"I'll no take a hundred pounds," was my answer.

"'"I'll make it guineas," quoth he.

"'Surely, thought I, my eyne maun be worth pearls and diamonds to the East India Company; so I answered and said—

"'"Captain, no to argol-bargol about the matter" (for a' the time I thocht upon how I had not been sworn in)—"what will ye gie me if I take away my eyne out of the vessel?"

"'"A thousand pounds," cried he.

"'"A bargain be't," said I. I think, however, had I stood out I might hae got mair. But it doesna rain thousands of pounds every day; so to make a long tale short, I gote a note of hand on the Bank of England for the sum, and, packing up my ends and my awls, left the ship.

"'It was my intent to have come immediately home to Scotland; but the same afternoon I was summoned by the Board at the Custom-house for deserting my post, and the moment I went before them, they opened upon me like my lord's pack of hounds, and said they would send me to Newgate.

"'"Cry a' at ance," quoth I; "but I'll no gang."

"'I then told them how I was na sworn, and under no obligation to serve or obey them mair than pleasured myself—which set them a' again a barking worse than before, whereupon, seeing no likelihood of an end to their stramash, I turned mysel' round, and, taking the door on my back, left them, and the same night came off on the fly to Edinburgh. Since syne they have been trying every grip an'

wile o' the law to punish me as they threatened ; but the laws of England are a great protection to the people against arbitrary power, and the letter that I have got to-day frae the nabob tells me that the commissioners have abandoned the plea.' "[1]

But the virtue of *The Provost* consists, not in the detached scenes, however vivid and true to nature these may be, so much as in the total effect which is produced by their combination. As a picture of everyday burghal life in Scotland, the life of which the external aspects are displayed in the columns of the provincial press—it has no rival. The details with which it is concerned may seem trivial in themselves, but Galt's fine sense of humour prevents him from stringing together a chance collection of irrelevant incidents, as the manner of the modern realist is, who boasts about his "scientific methods." In the juxtaposition of the pathetic and the humorous, the tragic and the commonplace, which we meet with so frequently in the world, Galt has something of Scott's judgment and dexterity. Nothing could be narrated with more simple and genuine pathos than the fate of Jean Gaisling who is hanged for child-murder. All the incidents, from the "dreadful wally-waeing" of her trollope of a mother to the erection of the scaffold by Thomas Gimlet at a handsome profit, are gravely and solemnly set forth, with no attempt either to enhance or extenuate the horror of the closing scene :—

"When the awful act was over, and the stir was for the magistrates to return, and the body to be cut down, poor Willy [Jean's brother] rose, and, without looking round, went down the steps of the scaffold ; the multitude made a lane for him to pass, and he went on through them hiding his face, and gaed straight out of the town."

You expect the chapter to end with some sombre and gloomy reflection ; some hit, it may be at capital punishment. Not so. Here is what immediately follows :—

[1] From *The Provost*, ch. vii. p. 32.

"As for the mother, we were obligated, in the course of the same year, to drum her out of the town for stealing thirteen choppin bottles from William Gallon's, the vintner's, and selling them for whisky to Maggy Picken, that was tried at the same time for the reset."

This is quite in the vein of Alick Polwarth.

Compared with *The Provost*, *Sir Andrew Wylie* is indeed deplorable enough stuff, though it embodies Galt's practical ideal in a sense in which none of his other works can be said to do so. It is a sort of epic of "getting on in the world," and thus embodies the national ideal in one of its most prominent aspects. The theme of the story is the rise of a lad from obscurity and poverty to fame and affluence by no other agency than his own shrewdness and perseverance. In the abstract, we cannot help admiring the qualities which effect this transformation. In the concrete, they are apt to be a little trying, and, frankly, Sir Andrew Wylie, with his combination of independence and servility, of shrewdness and buffoonery, is neither a very convincing nor a very attractive type of the self-made man. The sketches of high society are conventional and absurd, and though, where the scene is transferred from London back to Scotland, the artist's hand regains something of its old mastery, the book is manifestly a failure compared with the *Annals* or the *Entail*.

The Entail (1823) is, in some respects, Galt's most ambitious work. The intrigue is complicated, and for a layman it can be no joke to follow its progress through intricate mazes of the law of entail, so deliberately and, I believe, accurately threaded by the author. The ridiculous trial for murder in *Sir Andrew*, in which the jury, "as if actuated by some sublime impulse," proclaim the prisoner's innocence, is more than atoned for by the cognition of Watty on a brieve of idiotry in the *Entail*. But a novelist's reputation cannot in the long run depend upon the depth of his reading in Erskine or Blackstone, and, as regards the *Entail*, Galt has something more substantial

to build upon. The book may be said to be little else than a study of acquisitiveness through three generations of the Walkinshaws of Kittlestonheugh, and Balzac need not have felt disgraced by the grim realism with which Galt has carried out his purpose. Rarely have the passions of avarice and family pride been more powerfully presented than in the character of the old Laird Grippy ; and the old Leddy Grippy, though perhaps in her ultimate developments an afterthought, and therefore less consistent, is vigorous and racy in a very high degree. The constructive faculty had not been vouchsafed to Galt in any very ample measure. But he made amends for his deficiency by a shrewd eye for character, and a complete command up to a certain point of the vernacular. True eloquence in the Scots dialect, such as Scott, as we have seen, excelled in, he hardly so much as essayed ; but in more prosaic flights he is at once nervous and idiomatic. Nowhere does he show to better advantage (in spite of a little unnecessary bad spelling) than in the episode of bonnie Annie Daisie, which is the real gem of *The Last of the Lairds* (1826).

Somewhat akin to the work of Galt in tone and method is the *Autobiography of Mansie Waugh* (1828), from the pen of an amiable and accomplished medical practitioner at Musselburgh, David Macbeth Moir (1798–1851). The hero of the book is a tailor in Dalkeith, and many of the episodes through which he passes are described with a richness of humour which approaches more closely to caricature than anything in Galt. The best known scene is perhaps that which describes the first introduction of the magistrates and town councillors of a provincial burgh to that new form of tobacco, the "segar." The *Youth and Manhood of Cyril Thornton* (1827), by Thomas Hamilton (1789–1842), a soldier-brother of Sir William's, is concerned with persons who usually move on a much more lofty plane of society than that of municipal dignitaries, but the portions of it which still live are those which present a lively picture of Glasgow manners and customs at the

beginning of the nineteenth century. Hamilton, upon whose style and view of life the influence of Lockhart is perceptible, is sometimes a little malicious in his satire, and the "tobacco-lords" come off with something less than their due, but he is spirited and amusing, and his sketch, if it tends to exaggerate the peculiarities of its subject, is substantially true to life. The zest which pervades the following passage on the subject of the composition of a bowl of Glasgow punch holds out no delusive promise of the entertainment which the inquirer will occasionally find :—

"The office of mingling the discordant elements of punch into one sweet and harmonious whole, is perhaps the only one which calls into full play the sympathies and energies of a Glasgow gentleman. You read in the solemnity of his countenance his sense of the deep responsibility which attaches to the duty he discharges. He feels there is an awful trust confided to him. The fortune of the table is in his hands. One slight miscalculation of quantity—one exuberant pressure of the fingers—and the enjoyment of a whole party is destroyed. With what an air of deliberate sagacity does he perform the functions of his calling! How knowingly he squeezes the lemons, and distinguishes between Jamaica rum and Leeward Island, by the smell! No pointer ever nosed his game with more unerring accuracy. Then the snort, and the snifter, and the smacking of the lips, with which the beverage, when completed, is tasted by the whole party! Such a scene is worthy of the pencil of George Cruickshank, and he alone could do justice to its unrivalled ridicule." [1]

It is remarkable that, while the novel of character and manners was thus assiduously practised, the historical novel should have languished in the country of its birth. No such writers as James or Ainsworth sprang up to satiate the craving which Scott had so successfully appealed to, and the only historical romance which need here be mentioned is *The Wolf of Badenoch* (1827),[2] by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder (1784–1848). The *Wolf* is a work of great industry, and is a tolerable enough specimen of its kind. The characters speak

[1] From *Cyril Thornton*, vol. i. p. 77. [2] Reprinted, Edinburgh, 1886.

the most scrupulously archaic language, and cry you mercy or invoke a murrain on ye with a praiseworthy fidelity to the notorious conventions of the Middle Ages. But they lack the breath of life, and the book, though obviously the production of a man of taste, refinement, and learning, is not redeemed from mediocrity or tediousness by much of the true gift of the story-teller. In striking contrast is the same author's *Account of the Great Floods in Morayshire* [1] (1830), which in its own way is a classic, and which constitutes a worthy memorial of a certain series of extraordinary natural phenomena. Here, everything is vivacious and interesting, and the vernacular is handled with remarkable freedom and effect.[2]

The one successful novelist (Sir Walter being out of the question) who went farther afield than the domestic life of Scotland, was Michael Scott (1789–1835). He, like Galt, and Moir, and Hamilton, was one of Mr. Blackwood's men, and it was in the *Magazine* that *Tom Cringle's Log* (1833) made its bow to the public. His other work, *The Cruise of the Midge* (1836), though no less admirable in many respects, was scarcely so great a favourite as its predecessor. But both overflow with life and energy. At his best, Scott must be pronounced superior to Marryat, even in Marryat's own department, and *Tom Cringle* is a *locus classicus* as regards the condition of our West Indian Colonies at the period with which it deals. Scott, in effect, is a sort of link between Smollett and Marryat. He sees the humours of seafaring life as clearly, and depicts them as boldly, as either; and he does not shrink from scenes of horror which Smollett, who stuck at nothing, would not have disowned, and which Marryat has had the courage to emulate in only two or three passages, of which the most noteworthy occurs in *Snarleyow*.[3]

[1] 3rd ed., Elgin, 1873.

[2] See, for example, the account of the experiences of John Geddes, in the neighbourhood of Rothes, ed. *cit.*, p. 231, *et. seq.*

[3] The reminiscences of naval life and speech in the *Memoirs of an Aristocrat* (1838) by George Hume are the sole merit of a singular work

As regards the poetry of the age now in question we may say that there was much cry, but very little wool.[1] Verse was turned out in profusion, but very little of it would deserve commemoration even in a rag-bag of literature. William Tennant (1784–1848), a minister who in middle life was appointed to the Chair of Oriental Languages in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, won some celebrity by means of his *Anster Fair*[2] (1811). The poem is in the *Don Juan* metre, far-fetched rhymes and all, with the exception that the last line of the octave is an alexandrine. Its dialect is English, and, although its name is still so far remembered as to be considered legitimately available for an acrostic light, the poem is really of little note.

Moir,[3] who has already been noticed as the author of *Mansie Waugh*, was a fluent and industrious poet, and, under the pseudonym of Delta, which veiled his identity in *Blackwood*, achieved some reputation in his day. But there is more of facility in his versification than of distinction or impressiveness, and it is difficult to make allowances for the temperament which permitted him not only to compose, but to publish verses upon the series of bereavements which he sustained in his own domestic circle.[4] A stave from Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) is indeed refreshing after the tenderness of

the publication of which was restrained by interdict of the Court of Session.

[1] Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) went to London at a comparatively early age, and, none of his writings being in the vernacular, is not for us. *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799) and *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809) may be forgotten, but Campbell will always be remembered with pride by his countrymen, in conjunction with Thomson, as the bard of a truly national, as opposed to a merely provincial, patriotism. *Ye Mariners of England* and *Of Nelson and the North* are worthy sequels to *Rule Britannia*. Of James Montgomery (1771–1854) we are, on similar principles, to say nothing.

[2] Reprinted, Edinburgh, 1871.

[3] *Poetical Works*, ed. Aird, 1852.

[4] See his *Domestic Verses*, 1843, thoroughly *bonâ fide* in intention, but, in effect, scarce superior to the *In Memoriam* column in a halfpenny evening paper.

Delta. Not that Allan is always to be depended upon, either as an editor of ballads, or as an original ballad-monger. I have never ventured to disturb the dust that reposes upon *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell: a dramatic poem* (1822); but every Scotsman knows that his version of *My ain Countree* is an excellent good song, and every Briton can appreciate *A wet sheet and a flowing sea.*

William Motherwell [1] (1797–1835), like Allan Cunningham, was a collector of popular poetry, and his *Harp of Renfrewshire* (1819) and *Minstrelsy* (1827) are not without value. As regards his own performances, we may venture to disregard his *Renfrewshire Characters and Scenery* (1824), and we may pronounce his *Jeanie Morrison* to be thoroughly maudlin, and grossly over-rated. His excursions into the Scandinavian style, such as the *Battle-flag of Sigurd*, have a strong resemblance to every other member of what seems to some a not very inviting family. But in *The Madman's Love* Motherwell produced something which stands out beyond all his other work much as Smart's *Song to David* surpasses his "crib" to Horace. It is, in truth, an extremely striking and powerful poem, from which if we extract but a single verse, it must by no means be supposed that the whole is less worthy of attention.

"Ho! Flesh and Blood! Sweet Flesh and Blood
As ever strode on earth!
Welcome to Water and to Wood—
To all a Madman's mirth.
This tree is mine, this leafless tree,
That's writhen o'er the linn;
The stream is mine that fitfully
Pours forth its sullen din.
Their lord am I; and still my dream
Is of this tree—is of that stream."

[1] *Poetical Works*, ed. M'Conechy, Glasgow, 1846. Reprinted, Paisley, 1881.

Thomas Aird[1] (1802–76), a native of the hamlet of Bowden in Roxburghshire, enjoyed some celebrity as a poet in his day. But his verse seems to have little of the quality of permanence about it, and even *The Devil's Dream*, in which he was supposed to have put his best foot foremost, no longer charms the imagination of the reader. Henry Glassford Bell (1803–74) had a commanding personality, and was excellently qualified to fill the office of Sheriff of Lanarkshire. His prose is a little too "eloquent," but at least one of his efforts in verse, the *Mary Queeen of Scots*, used to be a prime favourite in every respectable schoolroom, and deserved to be so. William Nicholson (1783–1849) and James Hislop (1798–1827), both South-country men, attained a fleeting renown, the former by his *Brownie of Blednock*, the other by his *Cameronian's Dream*. The remainder of the poetical record for the 'twenties, 'thirties, and 'forties is made up of the names of men who wrote in the vernacular, but were, as a rule, more successful in emulating the weaknesses of Burns's character and work than in calling to mind his excellences. Among such men were William Thom (1788–1848), author of *The Mitherless Bairn*; William Miller (1810–72), author of *Wee Willie Winkie*; Alexander Rodger (1784–1846), and Robert Gilfillan (1798–1850). Their work is garnered in *Whistle Binkie; a collection of Songs for the Social Circle*[2] (1846), wherein the vernacular muse appears at her very worst, oscillating between extravagant sentimentality and intoxicated but cheerless mirth. To maunder over domestic bereavements and to celebrate the glories of inebriety are the two alternatives which seem to present themselves to the bard, and it would be difficult to decide which is the more offensive. There are few things worth preserving in *Whistle Binkie*, and most of these are the work of James Ballantine[3] (1808–77), who, though not

[1] *Poems*, 1848, 5th ed., with *Life* by Jardine Wallace, 1878.

[2] For an interesting account of *Whistle Binkie* and the contributors thereto, see Charles Mackay, *Through the Long Day*, 1887, vol. i. p. 185.

[3] See his *Gaberlunzie's Wallet*, 1843, a rather obvious imitation in plan and "get up" of *Master Humphry's Clock*.

wholly free from the defects of his school, never becomes unendurable.

Of the prose-writers of Scottish descent who flourished in the generation succeeding the death of Scott, by much the greatest, it need scarce be said, was Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). But the bulk of Carlyle's important work was accomplished in London, whither he migrated in 1834, and where he continued to reside for the remainder of his life; he was emphatically the Sage of Chelsea, not of Comely Bank; and accordingly it has been thought expedient to reserve full consideration of him for the literary history of England, and to confine ourselves here to those lesser lights whose lamp or farthing candle cast few rays beyond their own country.

Patrick Fraser Tytler[1] (1791–1849) came of a family already distinguished in literature, and added to its lustre by his *History of Scotland*. The work met with the strong disapproval of the Presbyterianism-at-any-price party; but the tendency of recent historians has been to set a rather higher value on Tytler's work than was usual even in his own generation.[2] George Cook (1772–1845), Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews, upon whom the mantle of his relative, Principal Hill, may be said to have fallen, published a *History of the Reformation* in 1810, and a *History of the Church of Scotland* in 1815. Their point of view is that of the orthodox Moderates, and though they cannot be described as lively reading, they are in the main trustworthy. To the same school of thought belonged John Lee (1779–1859), Principal in the University of Edinburgh, who in his youth had been a *protégé* of "Jupiter" Carlyle. A posthumous volume of *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland* (1860) and another of *Inaugural Addresses* (1861), besides a few pamphlets,

[1] *History of Scotland*, 9 vols., 1828–43. See his *Memoir* by J. W. Burgon, 1859, and his *History Examined* by Lord Fraser, 1848.

[2] For a review of Tytler's earlier volumes, see Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xxi. p. 152.

do scanty justice to his immense fund of learning and his unremitting industry. Of a very different temperament was Dr. Thomas M'Crie[1] (1772–1835), whose labours will always have a value for the serious historian. The mere dilettante they never succeeded in captivating. His chief works are the *Life of John Knox* (1812), and the *Life of Andrew Melville* (1819), both of which afforded him excellent opportunities for the assertion of what he conceived to be true-blue Presbyterian principles. Stern impartiality was not one of his foibles, but his bias is apparent enough not to be mischievous; his powers of casuistry are not so formidable as to make any one believe that wrong is right; and, so far as I am aware, he neither misrepresents nor suppresses important facts. Sir Archibald Alison (1792–1867) enjoyed a far more widely extended reputation than any of the historians just mentioned. He was accounted a standard author, and his *History of Europe during the French Revolution*,[2] with its continuation from the fall of Napoleon,[3] was esteemed one of those works which no gentleman's library should be without. The reaction has been severe. Few people now read him, and none, I should conjecture, buy him. His fame is preserved less by his own exertions than by one of Mr. Disraeli's most famous jibes. That his *History* is long and verbose cannot be disputed; but, with all its faults, it is doubtful whether a better view of the important period it deals with can be obtained in any other English work.

In addition to the historians, there were busily at work a number of antiquaries whose labours did much to elucidate the problems of Scottish archæology, history, and literature. David Herd (1732–1810) was the forerunner of all who have applied themselves to our older poetry with intelligence and zeal. But valuable as is his collection of *Ancient and Modern*

[1] *Works*, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1855–56. *Life*, by his son, Edinburgh, 1840.

[2] 10 vols., 1833–42.

[3] 9 vols., 1852–59.

Scottish Songs (1776), his chief legacy consists in the papers, some of which, through the instrumentality of David Laing, are now in the library of Edinburgh University. James Sibbald (1745–1803) was responsible for a *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry* (1802), the most valuable part of which is the glossary. The good faith of John Pinkerton (1758–1826) has been seriously questioned because of his predilection for palming off of original compositions as antique ballads. But he rendered solid service to his day and generation in historical, if not in literary, research, and that in spite of controversial methods more entertaining than commendable. His great antagonist was George Chalmers (1742–1825), who left his *Caledonia* [1] incomplete. Of its three quarto volumes, the first contains 880, the second 1014, and the third 900 pages, and whether it entirely justifies what its author claims for it in his preface,[2] it must be owned to be a miracle of industry.

The Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language,[3] compiled in 1808 by Dr. John Jamieson (1759–1838), has not yet been superseded as the leading authority on its subject. John Riddell (1785–1862) was unrivalled as an expert in genealogy and peerage law. To Robert Pitcairn (1793–1855) we owe an invaluable collection of Criminal Trials [4] (1833). With David Irving (1778–1860) we return once more to the literary type of antiquary. The *Lives of the Scotish Poets* (1804) and the *Lives of Scotish Writers* (1839) are indispensable

[1] 3 vols., 1807–24; new ed., 7 vols., Paisley, 1887–94.

[2] "Thus will it appear, from the perusal of the following account of North Britain, that there has been scarcely a controversy in her annals which is not therein settled, a defect which is not obviated, a knot which is not untied, or an obscurity that is not illustrated, from documents as new as they are decisive, though they are introduced for different purposes. Such is the elaboration of this work; it may perhaps supply hope with expectation that the wild controversies of the elder times may now be sent to lasting repose." *Caledonia, or an account historical and topographical of North Britain*, vol. i., preface.

[3] The best edition is that in 4 vols., Paisley, 1879–82.

[4] For Scott's review of the *Trials*, see *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. xxi. p. 199.

works, and perform satisfactorily what had been attempted more than a century before by Dr. George Mackenzie [1] (1669–1725). They are well supplemented by the posthumous *History of Scotish Poetry* (1861), edited by one who was probably the greatest of all the Scots literary antiquaries—David Laing (*sup. p.* 505*n.*). Beside Laing, James Maidment (1795–1879), though he did good enough work of its kind, is comparatively insignificant.

We have said enough to show that during the first thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century there was a "great outpouring" of the literary spirit in Scotland. And that outpouring was not withheld from the professions which on one side are "sib" to literature, though they can by no means be identified with it. I have already referred to the academic, ecclesiastical, and forensic tradition of "eloquence" in Scotland, and commented unfavourably, though not, it is hoped, harshly upon some of its manifestations. That tradition still flourished in the first forty years of the century. Never, probably, was the oral pleading of the Scottish bar more aptly linked with the art of oratory. In *Peter's Letters*, as has been said, we have a full account of the great advocates of the day, and of their respective peculiarities of speech, intonation, and gesture. We need do no more than refer the reader who is desirous of testing the capabilities of the legal profession of Scotland in this department to the speeches of Jeffrey and Cockburn for William Burke and Helen M'Dougal ; [2] to the speeches of all the counsel at the cognition of David Yoolow ; [3] and to the speech of Duncan M'Neill, afterwards Lord Colonsay, in defence of the Glasgow cotton-spinners.[4] But the activity of the bar, from a literary point of view, was

[1] *The Lives and Characters of the most eminent Writers of the Scots Nation.* 3 vols., folio, 1708–22. The work cannot altogether be trusted.

[2] *Report*, Edinburgh, 1829.

[3] *Report*, by L. Colquhoun, Edinburgh, 1837.

[4] *Report*, by A. C. Swinton, Edinburgh, 1838.

surpassed by the activity of the Church, in which the now triumphant Evangelicals were the chief participators.

There were hints, indeed, of a new development of thought, which was afterwards to make itself felt. Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (1788–1870), and John M'Leod Campbell (1800–72), minister of Row, deposed from the ministry of the Kirk for heresy in 1831, were pioneers of the mid-nineteenth century Broad Church movement. Another "scalp" secured by the Evangelicals was that of Edward Irving (1792–1834), the early friend of Thomas Carlyle. But for a while the Evangelicals had things all their own way, and in the Church of Scotland two names are prominent beyond all the rest, of which one is now almost forgotten, while the other, though still green, stands for principles of Church Government which many of its professing admirers have long since abandoned.

Andrew Thomson (1779–1831) was a man whose zeal, combined with a great gift of oratory, marked him out for the leadership of the Evangelical section of the Church, now rising into power on the decay of the Moderate party. In 1810 he established the *Christian Instructor*, a periodical which at one time found its way into every serious household, and undoubtedly helped to extend over the country the influence which he had acquired by his eloquent preaching. One or two volumes of his sermons [1] have been published, but they scarcely do justice to his abilities, being stiff, formal, and even occasionally pompous. To find him at his best we must seek him on the platform of some anti-slavery meeting, or on the floor of the General Assembly. Here, for instance, is the peroration of a speech, which lasted two-and-a-half hours, upon slavery in connection with the West Indies :—

[1] As, for example, *The Doctrine of Universal Pardon considered and refuted*, Edinburgh, 1830 ; and *Sermons and Sacramental Exhortations*, Edinburgh, 1831.

"But if you push me, and still urge the argument of insurrection and bloodshed, for which you are far more indebted to fancy than to fact, as I have shown you, then, I say, be it so. I repeat the maxim taken from a heathen book, but pervading the whole Book of God, *Fiat Justitia, ruat caelum.* Righteousness, sir, is the pillar of the universe. Break down that pillar, and the universe falls into ruin and desolation. But preserve it, and though the fair fabric may sustain partial dilapidations, it may be rebuilt and repaired—it *will* be rebuilt and repaired and restored in all its pristine strength and magnificence and beauty. If there must be violence, let it even come, for it will soon pass away—let it come and rage its little hour, since it is to be succeeded by lasting freedom and prosperity and happiness. Give me the hurricane rather than the pestilence. Give me the hurricane, with its thunder, and its lightning, and its tempest;—give me the hurricane with its partial and temporary devastations, awful though they be;—give me the hurricane, with its purifying, healthful, salutary effects;—give me that hurricane infinitely rather than the noisome pestilence, whose path is never crossed, whose silence is never disturbed, whose progress is never arrested by one sweeping blast from the heavens: which walks peacefully and sullenly through the length and breadth of the land, breathing poison into every heart, and carrying havoc into every home, enervating all that is strong, defacing all that is beautiful, and casting its blight over the fairest and happiest scenes of human life—and which, from day to day, and from year to year, with intolerant and interminable malignity, sends its thousands and its tens of thousands of hapless victims into the ever-yawning and never-satisfied grave!"[1]

This, to be sure, is not oratory of the highest type. It is too laboured, too ornate, too Corinthian. But it is not by any means bad declamation, and it was received with thunders of applause.

As a debater in the Church Courts, Thomson was in some respects superior even to Chalmers himself. He was a hard, perhaps not always a fair, hitter; and he was a master of all the arts which please an assembly like the Supreme Court of the Scottish Church, whose temper is necessarily rather

[1] From *Speech delivered at the Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society Meeting* by the Rev. Andrew Thomson, D.D., Minister of St. George's Church, Edin., 1830.

that of a jury than of a judge. He had the command of a large fund of broad humour, which he knew how to use effectively; and, though his merry-making is not always free from the suspicion of vulgarity, we can believe it to have been highly effective for its purpose. He makes his points in a telling and emphatic way; he always presses on under full sail; and he was fortunate in having the rising breeze of popularity to fill his canvas. On the other side of the Assembly there sat men, like Dr. Cook and Dr. Inglis, who were his equals in intellectual ability, and upon whom had fallen a portion of Principal Hill's mantle. But he had no opponent, not even excepting the Solicitor-General, Mr. John Hope, who could match him in raciness and vigour. The following extract is from his speech in the Little Dunkeld case,[1] in which the question at issue was, whether a Presbytery had done right to reject a presentee on the ground that he had no knowledge of Gaelic, that being the alleged language of the majority of the inhabitants of the parish to which the presentation had been made.

"No doubt some will be startled by this proposal, and will perhaps be shocked by the idea of our thus finding against the validity of a presentation, and that a *royal* presentation. Sir, I rejoice for my part that on this occasion it is a *royal presentation.* What may have been the motive of certain gentlemen for giving it that emphatic appellation in your minutes, I cannot pretend to divine. It is not unlikely that they may have thought the deed more secure by being fenced round with that imposing phraseology. They may have thought that it would have the effect of deterring their opponents from persevering in their hostility to the settlement which it authorised. They may have recollected the saying, *Dum non vult alter, timet alter dicere verum regibus,* and flattered themselves

[1] Next to Dr. Thomson's speech, the most remarkable contribution to the debate was that of Mr. Robertson of Forteviot, whose felicitous selection of language and pointed manner of expression have rarely been equalled in Scottish oratory, and have been reproduced with extraordinary fidelity in one of his immediate descendants.

that the maxim which it implies would operate in their favour. But for my own part, I feel neither the disinclination nor the fear which it predicates. And I am confident that in this house we shall feel a sense of duty to the people committed to our spiritual care to be paramount to all considerations whatever, and that we will not hesitate to speak the truth in such circumstances as those in which we are now placed to any patron, whoever he may be. Sir, I say it again, it gives me the sincerest joy to think that this is a royal presentation ; because, when found to be invalid, as I trust it will be by the decision of this night, it will go back to the Crown. We all remember his Majesty's visit to Scotland—we can never forget such a happy and auspicious event. And it must occur to us all that a multitude of Highlanders came to the metropolis to greet him on his approach here. Why, sir, so great was the multitude that assembled to welcome our gracious sovereign, that on looking along our streets you would have thought there was not a hat nor a pair of breeches left in the metropolis. The king, we know well, was delighted with the reception given him by the Highlanders, and it was difficult to say whether he or they were happiest. He seemed to like all that belonged to them or characterised them. Their dress adorned his person, their music charmed his ear, their mountain dews refreshed his spirit. And of their attached loyalty, their public services, and their virtues, he had the most ample and gratifying demonstration. He left us with a most favourable impression of his Highland subjects. If report speaks true, he cherishes that impression still, and takes pleasure in declaring it. And what can be expected, when this *royal presentation* goes back to him, but that he should feel deep regret for having been led by mistake to do anything so injurious to a portion of his brave and faithful Highlanders, and that he should be glad indeed to have an opportunity of repairing the wrong that had been inadvertently done, and of appointing a person as their minister whose labours would contribute to their spiritual comfort and advantage ?

" With respect to the presentee himself, I sympathise with him on the disappointment he must feel ; but I will not allow my sympathies to get the better of my sense of duty to the Church and to the people. We have heard much of his talents and attainments, and I am not disposed to question any part of the eulogium pronounced upon him. I acquiesce in it all ; but still I must not and cannot forget, that he is destitute of one endowment as necessary as any of those which he is said to possess—he is not endowed with a knowledge of the Gaelic. He may be as great as his namesake Lord Nelson, the thunder of whose achievements roared from

the Baltic to the Nile, whose fame circumnavigated the globe, and whose memory will be cherished as long as that country exists which he defended and adorned, and as long as there is a wave to dash upon its shores; but still he has no more Gaelic than his Lordship had, and therefore is as unfit to be minister of Little Dunkeld as would have been the Admiral. He may be wiser than his teachers and than all the ancients; but then he has no Gaelic. He may have more Greek and Latin than the Professors under whom he studied these learned languages; but still he is ignorant of Gaelic. He may be a profounder theologian than was John Calvin himself; but the loss is, he is void of Gaelic. His eloquence may be more splendid, and powerful, and overwhelming, than that of my reverend friend beside me (Dr. Chalmers), but with all this he knows not a word of Gaelic; and that is sufficient to determine us against finding him a qualified presentee. Partial as his friends may be to him, and worthy as they may hold him of preferment, we cannot with a good conscience permit him to be minister of Little Dunkeld. But it is consolatory to think that this does not blast all his prospects, as has been insinuated, with a view of enlisting our feelings on his side. We see that he has had influence enough to secure a *royal presentation*, and therefore that his friends are sufficiently powerful to procure him a benefice; and truly they show no lack of zeal and friendship when they attempt to thrust him into a parish where, from his ignorance of the language of its inhabitants, he could be of very little use as a minister of the gospel of Christ!"[1]

Thomas Chalmers[2] (1780–1847) was in most respects a much greater man than Thomson. Endowed with immense intellectual energy, he threw himself whole-heartedly into mathematics, into political economy, into social reform, into theology. At the outset of his ecclesiastical career his views were not of a specially rigid cast. In his first charge he practised the pluralism which he was afterwards to denounce;

[1] From Dr. Andrew Thomson's speech in the Little Dunkeld case, May 24, 1825.

[2] *Works*, 25 vols., Glasgow: n. d. *Posthumous Works*, 9 vols., Edinburgh, 1847–49. *Memoirs*, by his son-in-law, Dr. Hanna, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1849–52. For a remarkable estimate of Chalmers and his work see an article in the *North British Review*, November, 1856, from the pen of Isaac Taylor. It gave great offence to the "zealots."

and at no period in his career was he disposed to abate the just claims of the clergy to social importance and distinction. Never in Cathedral close or Papal conclave can those claims have been more ingenuously and vehemently asserted than in one of his earliest speeches in the General Assembly, from which I excerpt the following passage :—

"It is quite ridiculous to say that the worth of the clergy will suffice to keep them up in the estimation of society. This worth must be combined with importance. Give both worth and importance to the same individual, and what are the terms employed in describing him? 'A distinguished member of society, the ornament of a most respectable profession, the virtuous companion of the great, and a generous consolation to all the sickness and poverty around him.' These, Moderator, appear to me to be the terms peculiarly descriptive of the appropriate character of a clergyman, and they serve to mark the place which he ought to occupy; but take away the importance, and leave only the worth, and what do you make of him? What is the descriptive term applied to him now? Precisely the term which I often find applied to many of my brethren, and which galls me to the bone every moment I hear it—'*a fine body*'—a being whom you may like, but whom I defy you to esteem—a mere object of endearment—a being whom the great may at times honour with the condescension of a dinner, but whom they will never admit as a respectable addition to their society. Now, all that I demand from the Court of Teinds is to be raised, and that as speedily as possible, above the imputation of being '*a fine body*'; that they would add importance to my worth, and give splendour and efficacy to those exertions which have for their object the most exalted interests of the species."[1]

Chalmers's first published work was the anonymous pamphlet (1805) which he owned and recanted in an almost classical passage twenty years later. Soon after, his views became strongly Evangelical, but he did not find the work of a country parish in Fife so exacting as to preclude an excursion into political economy in the shape of an *Inquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources* (1808). In 1815 he was

[1] Dr. Chalmers, *apud* Hugh Miller, *Leading Articles*, p. 232.

translated to the Tron parish in Glasgow, which, four years later, he relinquished for the new parish of St. John's in the same city. There he initiated a scheme for the visitation and relief of the poor which is perhaps his noblest title to the grateful recollection of his countrymen. But he abandoned parochial work, for which he was eminently fitted, in favour of a chair in the University of St. Andrews, whence he passed in 1828 to that of Theology in the University of Edinburgh. Thenceforward he became immersed in the non-intrusion controversy, which culminated in the secession of 1843, and which put the finishing stroke to all hopes of Poor Law reform on his principles. He was the figurehead of the Disruption, and no movement could have desired a better.[1]

It is impossible to help regretting that Chalmers should have fallen into the toils of rigorous and militant Evangelicalism. His usefulness (in the wider sense), indeed, was only impaired, not destroyed, and works like his tract upon *Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments* (1827), or his exposition of the *Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns* (1821–26), or his lectures on *National Churches*, which created a *furore* in London in 1838, testify to the vast ability which was wasted in the turgid rhetoric of the once celebrated *Astronomical Discourses*[2] (1817). That the influence of the pulpit had a

[1] Probably the most powerful individual influence at work was that of Robert Smith Candlish (1806–73); a man of great intellectual gifts and probably the last of the eminent Calvinists *pur sang*. Candlish got the reputation (as James Hannay says) of infusing all the vinegar into the ecclesiastical wrangles of his day; while the credit for such oil as could be perceived went to Thomas Guthrie (1803–73), a notable philanthropist, and an extraordinarily popular preacher of the "eloquent" type.

[2] The following gem of criticism from Hugh Miller *àpropos* of that work must not be omitted. "Nominally a series of sermons, they in reality represent, and in the present century form perhaps the only worthy representatives of, that school of philosophic poetry to which, in ancient literature, the work of Lucretius belonged, and of which, in the literature of our own country, the *Seasons* of Thomson, and Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* furnish adequate examples. He would, I suspect, be no discriminating critic who would deal with the *Seasons* as if

deleterious defect upon his mode of expressing himself it were vain to deny, though to the pulpit must also be assigned the credit of some of his highest flights. Except in his loftiest and most inspired moments, Chalmers is apt to give one the impression of a man whose free use of his limbs is impeded by some hidden agency. His sense of proportion is a little defective ; and he is not seldom verbose, contorted, and obscure.

"The character of a university preacher is higher far than that of a parish minister. He is a national preacher. Around his pulpit the half of Scotland is assembled in the students over whom he presides. They are the seed which, scattered over the land, is to diffuse the splendours of science and religion among the people. There are certain delinquencies where the good that accrues to the criminal is equal to the loss sustained by the victim ; but there are others of a deeper dye, to which we give the name of atrocities, where the loss sustained by one party is indefinite. It is thus that the fraud of a seedsman who vends adulterated seed is reckoned a greater enormity than that of an ordinary tradesman, and is an object of keener execration than [that of] a dealer who impregnates an article of immediate consumption with some deleterious mixture, seeing that the deteriorated germ will universally send up a degenerate crop of unseemly and pestilent vegetation. It is easy to see the application of this principle to the question before us. Our college churches are, by the tendency of the law, as at present interpreted, destined to be the soil where a sickly and meagre and blighted crop of spiritual instruction shall grow up—where the fertilising waters shall not flow, and which shall never be truly refreshed by the irrigating process of wholesome pulpit ministration —the waters will be poisoned in the garden—the fountain-head is polluted, and the remotest streams are tainted by a deleterious influence; so that though you may have chased the disease which alarmed you from the extremities, you still suffer it to mix with and corrupt the heart's blood of your ecclesiastical system. Against a few petty retailers in the forbidden ware of pluralities you have passed a law of contraband, while still you patronise a traffic which

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they formed merely the journal of a naturalist, or by the poem of Akenside as if it were simply a metaphysical treatise." (*My Schools and Schoolmasters*, ed. 1891, p. 559.) The *De Rerum Naturâ*, the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and the *Astronomical Discourses* make a fine trio.

endangers the very constitution of your church, and are encouraging a vulgar selfishness which, mingling its impure influence in that vital current, will debase our moral and spiritual instructors, and make them to look without a sigh on the departing strength of our church, and its final decay!" [1]

This is distressing, not impressive; ambitious, not successful. Here are circumlocution and pomposity at their highest; here is revealed, not a great orator or debater, but merely a species of ecclesiastical Helen MacGregor. That these faults are not displeasing to a vitiated taste is unfortunately only too true. Such stuff is always sure of a pretty good market; and Chalmers must bear the blame of having taught many to rant who, had they followed the promptings of nature, would only have prosed, and many to bellow who should only have droned.

Yet there are times when Chalmers is a true orator, or, at least, rhetorician, and when he shows himself the master and not the servant of a polysyllabic vocabulary and a swelling diction. He is often happy in metaphor and illustration, though the preceding extract furnishes little reason for thinking so; and there is a roll in his periods to which the full tones of his broad Doric must have lent additional effect.[2] His sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte, and that on *The expulsive power of a new affection*, are two of the best of his efforts of which the pulpit was the scene; but his finest passages must probably be looked for in his speeches in the General Assembly, where there was scope, not only for the thunders of warning and denunciation, but also for satire and humour, of which last he possessed a genuine, though not a very deep, vein. The extract which I present exhibits in a

[1] From Dr. Chalmers' speech in the debate on the "Overtures anent the Union of Offices," May 25, 1825.

[2] For an account of the impression produced by his oratory see Professor Baynes's essay on *Sir William Hamilton* in *Edinburgh Essays*, 1857. Gilfillan, somewhere or other, quotes, "He that is *fulthy* let him be *fulthy stull*" as a specimen of his habitual pronunciation.

comparatively small compass many of the most typical features of the natural man and the practised orator. There is the outburst of unconcealed fury at the unfortunate "resurrection-man" who has unearthed the obnoxious pamphlet, artfully shading away into elaborate expressions of affected gratitude for thus affording him an opportunity of doing penance. There is the ample and unqualified avowal of repentance; for your true orator knows that, if there is recantation to be done, it had best be done handsomely, and with every circumstance of self-humiliation. Lastly, there is the extraordinarily skilful adaptation of the passage to the temper of the audience to whom the speech was addressed. Nothing could be more adroit than the way in which, in the first paragraph, he plays on the *amour propre* of his clerical hearers, and puts them upon thoroughly good terms with themselves. This paves the way for making them, as it were, participants in the magnanimity of the final palinode. Every minister, you feel assured, will go home proudly conscious of his ability to fill a professorial chair, but no less conscious of the unswerving rectitude which will make him decline to hold any such appointment along with a city charge. And yet, though all these elements are present, there is no touch of theatricality, or at least of insincerity, about the performance: it reads like what it was—the impetuous outpouring of the speaker's genuine sentiments at the time on a subject of great public and personal moment.

"Sir, that pamphlet I now declare to have been a production of my own, published twenty years ago. I was indeed much surprised to hear it brought forward and quoted this evening; and I instantly conceived that the reverend gentleman who did so had been working at the trade of resurrection-man. Verily I believed that my unfortunate pamphlet had long ere now descended into the tomb of merited oblivion, and that there it was mouldering in silence, forgotten and disregarded. But since that gentleman has brought it forward in the face of this house, I can assure him that I feel grateful to him from the bottom of my heart, for the opportunity he has now afforded me of making a public recantation of

the sentiments it contains. I have read a tract entitled the *Last Moments of the Earl of Rochester,* and I was powerfully struck in reading it with the conviction how much evil a pernicious pamphlet may be the means of disseminating. At the time when I wrote it I did not conceive that my pamphlet would do much evil; but, Sir, considering the conclusions that have been deduced from it by the reverend gentleman, I do feel obliged to him for reviving it, and for bringing me forward to make my public renunciation of what is there written. I now confess myself to have indeed been guilty of a heinous crime, and I now stand a repentant culprit before the bar of this venerable Assembly.

"The circumstances attending the publication of my pamphlet were shortly as follows: As far back as twenty years ago, I was ambitious enough to aspire to be successor of Professor Playfair in the mathematical chair of the University of Edinburgh. During the discussion which took place relative to the person who might be appointed his successor, there appeared a letter from Professor Playfair to the magistrates of Edinburgh on the subject, in which he stated it as his conviction that no person could be found competent to discharge the duties of the mathematical chair among the clergymen of the Church of Scotland. I was at that time, Sir, more devoted to mathematics than to the literature of my profession; and feeling grieved and indignant at what I conceived an undue reflection on the abilities and education of our clergy, I came forward to rescue them from what I deemed an unmerited reproach, by maintaining that a devoted and exclusive attention to the study of mathematics was not dissonant to the proper habit of a clergyman. Alas! Sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have now no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and that, in the utterance of it, I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, Sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But *then,* Sir, I had forgotten *two magnitudes*—I thought not of the littleness of time—I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity!"[1]

The "Ten Years' Conflict" produced a perfect deluge of tracts and pamphlets, few of which are conspicuous for literary merit, while many are disfigured by deplorable rancour

[1] From Dr. Chalmers's reply in the debate on the "Overtures anent the Union of Offices," May 26, 1825.

and vindictiveness.[1] It is unnecessary to decide with which party the advantage in argument rested ; but in point of bad temper and uncharitableness, an unenviable superiority must be conceded to the "highflyers," who assuredly spared no asperity of reproach and no brutality of insolence. In this carnival of invective and recrimination, only one man of really superior literary talents came to the front. Hugh Miller[2] (1802–56) sprang, like Hogg, from the "bosom of the people," and for many years pursued the calling of a stone-mason in the neighbourhood of Cromarty, of which he was a native. Miller published a volume of poems in 1829, which fell dead-born from the press ; and it was not until ten years later that he was fairly launched upon a literary career. Like many of his countrymen, he took a keen interest in ecclesiastical affairs, espousing the non-intrusion cause with heart and soul. When the decision of the House of Lords, affirming the judgment of the Court of Session in the Auchterarder case, struck dismay into the supporters of that view, Miller concocted and published a strongly worded *Letter to Lord Brougham* (1839), who had delivered the leading opinion in favour of the respondents.[3] This at once attracted public attention, and the writer was brought to Edinburgh in the same year to edit *The Witness*, which was the organ of the anti-patronage party. Thenceforth Miller was known partly as a journalist of no mean ability, partly as a geologist who was looked upon with a kindly eye by men like Lyell, Agassiz, and Murchison, and who could be depended upon to refute

[1] As a curiosity, if not of literature, yet of polemics, we may refer to a pamphlet published immediately after the Disruption by a provincial journalist under the impious title of *The Wheat and the Chaff, gathered into bundles* (Perth, 1843). Few more scurrilous and disgraceful productions are recorded in the annals of any religious controversy.

[2] *Works*, 12 vols., Edinburgh, 1869. *Life*, by Bayne, 2 vols., 1871. There is also a brief monograph by Leask, Edinburgh, 1896.

[3] *Earl of Kinnoull* v. *Presbytery of Auchterarder*, May 3, 1839, Maclean & Robinson's App. p. 220, at p. 247.

the mischievous fallacies of sceptics like the author of *Vestiges of the Creation* (*supra*, p. 537). It is, indeed, his fondness for reconciling the discoveries of geology with the Mosaic cosmogony which, more than anything else, has deprived books, otherwise of much merit, like *The Old Red Sandstone* (1841), *Footprints of the Creator* (1850), and *The Testimony of the Rocks* (1857), of any chance of a permanent scientific reputation. By far Miller's best work is *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1854), though excellent snatches of description [1] may here and there be found in the posthumous selection from his *Leading Articles*, published in 1870. But the controversies over which he wore out his life have now ceased to possess any interest, save for the specialist.

In many respects Hugh Miller is a sufficiently ridiculous personage. It is impossible to sympathise with his tone or his way of looking at things. It is not his piety that offends and irritates, but the narrowness of view, the want of charity, the malignity (almost), which seem to be its inseparable concomitants. To borrow language dear to his school of religious thought, his heart is "hard as the nether millstone" when he comes to deal with people who do not pronounce his shibboleth, or see eye to eye with him on questions which affect the spiritual interests of the Church. He is almost as severe after the disruption to those in the Free Kirk who differ from him on the education question, as he had been to those who followed Dr. Cook in preference to Dr. Chalmers. No one would dream of taxing him with deficiencies in education which he had done so much by assiduous study to repair. Yet it may be said of him with some justice that he did not take a really sane view of life; that his sense of humour was radically defective; and that, to sum up, he was not much better than an eighteenth-century *philosophe* turned Evangelical.

But, with all his shortcomings, Miller deserves more than

[1] See for example the opening paragraph of the account of the funeral of Kemp, the ill-fated architect of the Scott monument.

passing mention. In the first place, he is the very incarnation of the moral and intellectual type which came to the front in Scotland during the controversy which reached a head in the Disruption. That singular combination of humility with pride, of ardent devotion to a religious watchword (or catch-word) with indifference to many of the characteristically Christian graces, has often been exhibited in ecclesiastical brawls, but seldom in such richness and perfection. Miller is full of zeal for the spiritual rights of the people (or at least of that section of it which, being male, is married and has a family), but there is nothing democratic, still less anything *sans-cullotic*, in his tone. An Irish critic has recently made the surprising discovery that Burns, in sentiment, belongs essentially to the middle-classes. If that be true, how shall we frame a superlative of the adjective *bourgeois* sufficiently intense to meet the case of Hugh Miller? He has independence in plenty, and can affect lowliness of mind for rhetorical purposes. But the pride of respectability is omnipresent in his writings, and his spiritual arrogance is unbounded. The organisers and spokesmen of the Disruption (many of whom were originally Conservative in politics) were never able to conceal their satisfaction at the number of legal and territorial big-wigs of whom their ranks could boast. Mr. Fox Maule, afterwards Lord Panmure, was for them a very Prince in Israel, though he was rarely suspected of being a precisian in private life. This feeling is everywhere latent in Miller, though his politics were Whig. Those who "came out" were for him the salt of the earth, the aristocracy of the Church. Those who staid in were their inferiors, socially, intellectually, and morally. In vain do we look for a trace of that poverty of spirit which is selected as the subject of one of the Beatitudes, or of that charity which hopeth all things and endureth all things. And thus, as we have said, Miller truly embodies that "spirit of the Disruption," into which a zealot is said once to have prayed that some unfortunate infant might be baptised. It would be

rash to say that that spirit has been wholly quenched, but for at least a quarter of a century it has been kept in its proper place, and shorn of much of its pristine power.

In the second place, Miller is really noteworthy because he wrote remarkably good English: better English than was probably to be heard in any Scottish pulpit of his time, with the possible exception of Forteviot. Where he picked it up it would be difficult to determine. He has told us much of his appetite for reading as a boy, but none of the works which he used to devour quite explains his peculiar excellence. It cannot be said that the influence of the Authorised Version, or of Bunyan, or of the old Scots divines, is to any great extent perceptible in his writing. He would appear simply to have acquired the knack for himself. Ease is not one of his characteristics, and the impression can scarcely be avoided that he is composing in a strange tongue. But his English is clean-cut and well-ordered, pointed and terse, scarcely ever straggling or long-winded. That he should have wholly avoided the *patois* of the moss-hags was not to be expected; but when he does use it, it is with economy and discretion. Had his freedom as an editor not been restricted by the clerical supervision which drove him to his doom, he might have become a great journalist. As it is, he was a respectable one, and not a newspaper in Scotland at the present day can show in its columns writing which, *quâ* writing, is comparable to what is buried in the grave of the *Witness*. In narrative and description he is admirable, in exposition and argument less excellent, and in attack perhaps best of all. The passage which I subjoin from the *Letter to Lord Brougham* will give some notion of his spirit and vivacity, whatever we may think of his taste. At first sight, an attack of the sort upon a judge for a judicial decision may well seem a piece of colossal impudence; but Brougham is a man whom no one is very much concerned to defend; feeling ran indescribably high; and there are expressions in Brougham's judgment which to

the rabid non-intrusionist must have been galling in the last degree :—

"My Lord, I am a plain working man in rather humble circumstances, a native of the north of Scotland, and a member of the Established Church. I am acquainted with no other language than the one in which I address your Lordship, and the very limited knowledge which I possess has been won slowly and painfully from observation and reflection, with now and then the assistance of a stray volume, in the intervals of a laborious life. I am not too uninformed, however, to appreciate your Lordship's extraordinary powers and acquirements ; and as the cause of freedom is peculiarly the cause of the class to which I belong, and as my acquaintance with the evils of ignorance has been by much too close and too tangible to leave me indifferent to the blessings of education, I have been no careless or uninterested spectator of your Lordship's public career. No, my Lord, I have felt my heart swell as I pronounced the name of Henry Brougham.

"With many thousands of my countrymen, I have waited in deep anxiety for your Lordship's opinion on the Auchterarder case. Aware that what may seem clear as a matter of right may be yet exceedingly doubtful as a question of law,—aware, too, that your Lordship had to decide in this matter not as a legislator, but as a judge, I was afraid that, though you yourself might be our friend, you might yet have to pronounce the law our enemy. And yet, the bare majority by which the case had been carried against us in the Court of Session,—the consideration, too, that the judges who had declared in our favour rank among the ablest lawyers and most accomplished men that our country has ever produced, had inclined me to hope that the statute-book as interpreted by your Lordship might not be found very decidedly against us. But of you yourself, my Lord, I could entertain no doubt. You had exerted all your energies in sweeping away the Old Sarums and East Retfords of the constitution. Could I once harbour the suspicion that you had become tolerant of the Old Sarums and East Retfords of the Church! You had declared, whether wisely or otherwise, that men possessed of no property qualification, and as humble and as little taught as the individual who now addresses you, should be admitted, on the strength of their moral and intellectual qualities alone, to exercise a voice in the Legislature of the country. Could I suppose for a moment, that you deemed that portion of these very men which falls to the share of Scotland, unfitted to exercise a voice in the election of a parish minister!—or rather, for I understate the case,

that you held them unworthy of being emancipated from the thraldom of a degrading law,—the remnant of a barbarous code, which conveys them over by thousands and miles square to the charge of patronage-courting clergymen, practically unacquainted with the religion they profess to teach. Surely the people of Scotland are not so changed but that they know at least as much of the doctrines of the New Testament as of the principles of civil Government,—and of the requisites of a Gospel minister as of the qualifications of a member of Parliament!"

After a violent attack on the Moderates of the past, including Principal Robertson, the pamphleteer proceeds to give his own version of Scots ecclesiastical history, drawn, by his own admission, from Knox, Calderwood, and Wodrow, and finally winds up thus:—

"The Church has offended many of her noblest and wealthiest, it is said, and they are flying from her in crowds. Well, what matters it?—let the chaff fly! We care not though she shake off in her wholesome exercise some of the indolent humours which have hung about her so long. The vital principle will act with all the more vigour when they are gone. She may yet have to pour forth her life's blood through some incurable and deadly wound; for do we not know that though *the Church* be immortal, Churches are born and die? But the blow will be dealt in a different quarrel, and on other and lower ground. Not when her ministers, for the sake of the spiritual, lessen their hold of the secular. Not when, convinced of the justice of the old quarrel, they take up their position on the well-trodden battle-field of her saints and martyrs. Not when they stand side by side with her people, to contend for their common rights, in accordance with the dictates of their consciences, and agreeably to the law of their God. The reforming spirit is vigorous within her, and her hour is not yet come."[1]

It is, on the whole, perhaps, a misfortune that the persons turned out by modern systems of education are so much superior to, or at least so different from, Hugh Miller.

[1] From *Letter to Lord Brougham*, Edinburgh, 1839.

CHAPTER XI

THE VICTORIAN ERA: 1848–1880

THE generation succeeding the Disruption produced a large number of writers of various sorts in Scotland. Scarce one of these attained the highest degree of excellence. Many, indeed, entered upon their voyage with a fair tide and a favouring breeze, whose barque, if it ever reached the haven of fame, now lies, a crazy old hulk, cast up on the beach, displaced by newer and more attractive craft. Some there were who missed the very first rank by little more than a hair's breadth. But in literature, if not in other occupations, a miss is as good as a mile. There are probably few periods in the history of Scottish letters in which so many promising reputations have come to almost nothing. Few, therefore, are so rich in works which it might be well worth the while of the industrious magazine-writer to disinter. A critical and detailed survey, for example, of the careers of Alexander Smith, David Gray, and Robert Buchanan, could not fail to contain many instructive literary, as well as other, lessons.

The most versatile, and not the least clever, of the men of letters who flourished during these years was William Edmondstoune Aytoun[1] (1813–65), a member of the Scottish bar,

[1] *Memoir*, by Martin, Edin., 1867. There is no collected edition of Aytoun's works. I cite from the 1872 ed. of the *Lays*, and the 1874 ed. of *Bon Gaultier*. For a detailed criticism of Aytoun's work, see *New Review*, January, 1896.

who was appointed to the chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh, in 1845, and to the Sheriffship of Orkney and Zetland in 1852. Aytoun was, heart and soul, a "Blackwood" man, and he contributed innumerable articles of all sorts to the columns of *Maga*, the greater part of which is necessarily beyond resuscitation. It may be said, however, that, while his political articles are unusually well-reasoned and weighty, it is his lightness of touch which gives his papers on miscellaneous topics their chief value. His good spirits were infectious; and he had the journalist's gift of being always seasonable and "on the spot." If anything could have made up to the editor for the loss of Wilson, it must have been the acquisition of Wilson's son-in-law as a contributor.

Alike in poetry and prose, Aytoun's most ambitious essays were comparative failures. *Bothwell* (1856) suffers from being cast in the form of a monologue, and the subject, though a tempting one, is of a character to subject the highest poetical capacity to a severe test. *Norman Sinclair* (1861) is a novel of the orthodox autobiographical stamp, a genuine three-decker. Some idea of its length may be conveyed by the statement that it began to appear in *Blackwood's Magazine* in the January of one year, and was not completed until the August of the next. No doubt, it contains a certain number of graphic and entertaining episodes; but the effect of the book as a whole is one of rambling incoherence. Perhaps Aytoun's powers were incapable of any long-sustained effort. At all events, it is certain that his turn for poetry is far more advantageously displayed in the *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* (1848) than in *Bothwell*. Here, also, he found a congenial vehicle for exhibiting the strain of Tory sentiment peculiar to him. His father had been a Whig, but Aytoun as a young man imbibed principles which may fairly be described as a mixture of "Young England" theories with a belated Jacobitism. The Jacobite element in his views was undoubtedly sincere

and even passionate. Yet it was, of necessity, little better than academic, and the artificiality attaching to it appears to me to vitiate most of the *Lays*. These poems are well found in point of technique, and have for long commended themselves to the schoolboy and the village reciter. They contain much that is telling, though little that is moving, and, while admirable as rhetoric, seldom rise to the level of true poetry. The best of the *Lays* is perhaps the least known and least remembered—*The Island of the Scots*. Here is one stanza which is charged with more true feeling than can be met with in most of its fellows :—

"And did they twine the laurel-wreath
For those who fought so well?
And did they honour those who lived,
And weep for those who fell?
What meed of thanks was given to them
Let agèd annals tell.
Why should they bring the laurel wreath,
Why crown the cup with wine?
It was not Frenchmen's blood that flowed
So freely on the Rhine—
A stranger band of beggared men
Had done the venturous deed:
The glory was to France alone,
The danger was their meed.
And what cared they for idle thanks
From foreign prince and peer?
What virtue had such honeyed words
The exiled heart to cheer?
What mattered it that men should vaunt
And loud and fondly swear,
That higher feat of chivalry
Was never wrought elsewhere?
They bore within their breasts the grief
That fame can never heal—
The deep unutterable woe
Which none save exiles feel.
Their hearts were yearning for the land
They ne'er might see again—

For Scotland's high and heathered hills,
For mountain loch and glen—
For those who haply lay at rest
Beyond the distant sea,
Beneath the green and daisied turf
Where they would gladly be!" [1]

It is a little diffuse, and not free from epithets that are otiose and lines that are flat. But I am disposed to think that it is poetry after all.

Sir Theodore Martin surmises that Aytoun's keen sense of the ludicrous, disabled him from doing himself justice in serious verse. Whether this be so or not, some of his very best metrical work will be found in that *tour de force*, *Firmilian* (1854), which, like many other parodies, has perished with what it was designed to ridicule. Expanded from extracts in a bogus review which had appeared in *Maga* and bamboozled many of the critics, *Firmilian* is an attack upon the "spasmodic" school of poetry as represented by Bailey, Dobell, and Alexander Smith (*infra*, p. 596). We cannot blame very severely the people who knew not if *Firmilian* was to be taken seriously or not; for, while with high-sounding passages there were mingled tracts of the most prosaic sentiment and language (a characteristic trait of the school of poetry assailed), there were snatches of what might quite excusably be mistaken for tolerable poetry.

"What we write
Must be the reflex of the thing we know;
For who can limn the morning if his eyes
Have never looked upon Aurora's face?
Or who describe the cadence of the sea,
Whose ears were never open to the waves,
Or the shrill winding of the Triton's horn?"

This is sonorous, and it is not nonsense. Or, again:—

[1] *Lays*, p. 172.

> "We have gazed
> Together on the midnight map of heaven,
> And marked the gems in Cassiopeia's hair—
> Together have we heard the nightingale
> Waste the exuberant music of her throat
> And lull the flustering breezes into calm."

Much worse stuff than this has often been loudly applauded. The lyrical passages, too, such, as—

> "Firmilian, Firmilian,
> What have you done with Lilian," &c.

are often a good deal more melodious than what corresponds to them in the objects of the parody. Whether regarded as caricaturing the thought or the style of the "Spasmodics," *Firmilian* must be pronounced to be one of the great successes in a *genre* in which mediocrity is far more common than high attainment.

Aytoun's genius for drollery assumes a less ephemeral form in the short stories which he wrote for *Blackwood*. Among the many humorous *Tales* collected from that venerable periodical his are unquestionably the best; and, in truth, they approach as closely to perfection in their own kind as it is possible for human performances to do. *How I became a Yeoman*, *The Emerald Studs*, *How I stood for the Dreepdaily Burghs*, *How we got possession of the Tuilieries*, and *The Glenmutchkin Railway*,[1] form as delectable an anthology of its sort as man could desire: and the best of them are *Dreepdaily* and *Glenmutchkin*. They are all conceived in a vein of "touch-and-go" farce, they have no *arrière pensée*, and they are brought off with a lightness of hand comparable only to that of some great *chef* who manipulates an omelette. Yet you may learn more about one aspect of Scottish politics from *Dreepdaily* than from many solemn

[1] These will all be found in the well-known *Tales from Blackwood*, 1st series.

and pretentious treatises; and as for *Glenmutchkin*, its interest can only evaporate when prospectuses cease to be issued. Here *is* the prospectus of that famous company :—

"DIRECT GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY.

IN 12,000 SHARES OF £20 EACH. DEPOSIT £1 PER SHARE.

Provisional Committee.

SIR POLLEXFEN TREMENS, Bart., of Toddymains.
TAVISH M'TAVISH of Invertavish.
THE M'CLOSKIE.
AUGUSTUS REGINALD DUNSHUNNER, Esq., of St. Mirrens.
SAMUEL SAWLEY, Esq., Merchant.
MHIC-MHAC-VICH-INDUIB.
PHELIM O'FINLAN, Esq., of Castle-rook, Ireland.
THE CAPTAIN OF M'ALCOHOL.
FACTOR for GLENTUMBLERS.
JOHN JOB JOBSON, Esq., Manufacturer.
EVAN M'CLAW of Glenscart and Inveryewky.
JOSEPH HECKLES, Esq.
HABBAKUK GRABBIE, Portioner in Ramoth-Drumclog.

Engineer—WALTER SOLDER, Esq.
Interim-Secretary—ROBERT M'CORKINDALE, Esq.

"The necessity of a direct line of communication through the fertile and populous district known as the VALLEY OF GLENMUTCHKIN, has been felt and universally acknowledged. Independently of the surpassing grandeur of its mountain scenery, which shall immediately be referred to, and other considerations of even greater importance, GLENMUTCHKIN is known to the capitalist as the most important BREEDING STATION in the Highlands of Scotland, and indeed as the great emporium from which the southern markets are supplied. It has been calculated by a most eminent authority that every acre in the strath is capable of rearing twenty head of cattle; and, as it has been ascertained, after a careful admeasurement, that there are not less than TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND improvable acres immediately contiguous to the proposed line of railway, it may confidently be assumed that the number of cattle to be conveyed along the line will amount to FOUR MILLIONS annually, which, at the lowest estimate, would yield a revenue larger in proportion to the capital subscribed, than that of any railway as yet completed within the United Kingdom. From this

estimate the traffic in Sheep and Goats, with which the mountains are literally covered, has been carefully excluded, it having been found quite impossible (from its extent) to compute the actual revenue to be drawn from that most important branch. It may, however, be roughly assumed as from seventeen to nineteen per cent. upon the whole, after deduction of the working expenses.

"The population of Glenmutchkin is extremely dense. Its situation on the West Coast has afforded it the means of direct communication with America, of which for many years the inhabitants have actively availed themselves. Indeed, the amount of exportation of live stock from this part of the Highlands to the Western continent has more than once attracted the attention of Parliament. The Manufactures are large and comprehensive, and include the most famous distilleries in the world. The Minerals are most abundant, and amongst these may be reckoned quartz, porphyry, felspar, malachite, manganese, and basalt.

"At the foot of the valley, and close to the sea, lies the important village known as the CLACHAN of INVERSTARVE. It is supposed by various antiquaries to have been the capital of the Picts, and, amongst the busy inroads of commercial prosperity, it still retains some traces of its former grandeur. There is a large fishing station here, to which vessels of every nation resort, and the demand for foreign produce is daily and steadily increasing.

"As a sporting country Glenmutchkin is unrivalled; but it is by the tourists that its beauties will most greedily be sought. These consist of every combination which plastic nature can afford—cliffs of unusual magnitude and grandeur—waterfalls only second to the sublime cascades of Norway, woods of which the bark is a remarkably valuable commodity. It need scarcely be added, to arouse the enthusiasm inseparable from this glorious glen, that here, in 1745, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, then in the zenith of his hopes, was joined by the brave Sir Grugar M'Grugar at the head of his devoted clan.

"The Railway will be twelve miles long, and can be completed within six months after the Act of Parliament is obtained. The gradients are easy, and the curves obtuse. There are no viaducts of any importance, and only four tunnels along the whole length of the line. The shortest of these does not exceed a mile and a half.

"In conclusion, the projectors of this railway beg to state that they have determined, as a principle, to set their face AGAINST ALL SUNDAY TRAVELLING WHATSOEVER, and to oppose EVERY BILL which may hereafter be brought into Parliament, unless it shall contain a clause to that effect. It is also their intention to take

up the cause of the poor and neglected STOKER, for whose accommodation, and social, moral, religious, and intellectual improvement a large stock of evangelical tracts will speedily be required. Tenders of these, in quantities of not less than 12,000, may be sent to the Interim Secretary. Shares must be applied for within ten days of the present date.

"By order of the Provisional Committee,

"ROBT. M'CORKINDALE, *Secretary*."[1]

Every word, it might almost be said, in this inimitable document is a delight, though perhaps the finest strokes of all are in the names of the directorate. No one but a Scot can appreciate them to the full; and, indeed, Aytoun's thorough knowledge of his countrymen is one of his strongest points.

To see Aytoun's gift of caricature at its very best we must probably turn to *The Book of Ballads, Edited by Bon Gaultier* (1855), in which his *collaborateur* was Mr. (now Sir) Theodore Martin (b. 1816).[2] Aytoun and Martin had been friends in their youth, and before the latter became a Parliamentary solicitor in London had joined in contributions of various kinds to *Maga*, including certain translations from Goethe, which were collected and published in 1858. Sir Theodore is one of those to whom it has been given to combine great professional with great literary success. His translations from Horace (1882), from Dante (1862), from Goethe (1865–86), and from Heine (1878) show no little taste and refinement of feeling, in addition to the technical dexterity of a poet, and that he still retains these gifts in his old age is obvious from the versions of Sismondi's poems which appeared from his pen in *Blackwood* during the autumn of 1902. In prose, he has been the official biographer of the Prince Consort (1874–80)—a post wherein he displayed great tact and judgment—and he has also written the lives of Lord

[1] From *How we got up the Glenmutchkin Railway and how we got out of it*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, October, 1845.

[2] I believe that we may shortly have a new and annotated edition of *Bon Gaultier* from Sir Theodore himself.

Lyndhurst (1883), the Princess Alice (1885), and his own wife (1900), the celebrated Helen Faucit.

But to return to *Bon Gaultier*. It has not, I think, been yet ascertained what were the respective shares of the two authors in this work—the most successful collection of parodies that had appeared since *Rejected Addresses*. But we know from his colleague that Aytoun alone was responsible for *The Lay of the Love-lorn*, for that spirited Celtic lyric, *The Massacre of the Macpherson*, and for *The Queen in France*; that is to say, for the three of the best pieces in the book. On *Phairshon* it is needless to dilate, for it is still pretty widely known. Of the *Love-lorn*, it may be said that it supplies at once the best burlesque and the best criticism of *Locksley Hall* that can anywhere be found. The peculiarities of the metre are reproduced with striking fidelity and an absolutely correct ear;[1] but not with more fidelity than the vein of thought peculiar to its singular hero, and the strain of high-falutin' in which he indulges. Verses like—

"Happy! Damme! Thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
Changing from the best of china to the commonest of clay.
As the husband is, the wife is—he is stomach-plagued and old;
And his curry soups will make thy cheek the colour of his gold;"

or like—

"Cursed be the Bank of England's notes, that tempt the soul to sin!
Cursed be the want of acres,—doubly cursed the want of tin!"

or like—

"There I'll rear my young mulattoes, as no Bond Street brats are reared;
They shall dive for alligators, catch the wild-goats by the beard—
Whistle to the cockatoos and mock the hairy-faced baboon,
Worship mighty Mumbo Jumbo in the Mountains of the Moon"—

[1] *E.g.*, the rather unexpected *cæsura* in a line like "Resting there beneath the porch, my nerves will steady like a rock."

such verses breathe the very spirit of the young gentleman whose ravings about his Amy and the progress of the Universe used to fire so many ardent spirits.

As for *The Queen in France* (which gives an imaginary account of the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to Louis Philippe) it is probably the best parody ever made upon the style of the old Ballads, infinitely ludicrous, and free from the *bêtises* and the relapses into flat vulgarity which have too frequently marked attempts to burlesque the characteristic diction of those compositions. Bear witness the following stanzas :—

"The sun was high within the lift,
Afore the French King raise ;
And syne he louped until his sark,
And warslit on his claes.

'Gae up, gae up, my little foot-page,
Gae up until the toun ;
And gin ye meet wi' the auld harper,
Be sure ye bring him doun.'

And he has met wi' the auld harper,
O but his een were reid ;
And the bizzing o' a swarm o' bees
Was singing in his heid.

'Alack ! alack !' the harper said,
'That this should e'er hae been !
I daurna gang before my liege,
For I was fou yestreen.'

'O it's ye maun come, ye auld harper
Ye daurna tarry lang ;
The King is just dementit-like,
For wanting o' a sang.'"

Even better is the Queen's farewell to her Royal host :—

"Three days had come, three days had gane,
The fourth began to fa',
When our gude Queen to the Frenchman said,
'It's time I was awa !'

O, bonny are the fields o' France,
And saftly draps the rain;
But my bairnies are in Windsor Town,
And greeting a' their lane.

Now ye maun come to me, Sir King,
As I have come to ye;
And a benison upon your heid,
For a' your courtesie!

Ye maun come and bring your ladye fere;
Ye sall na say me no;
And ye'se mind, we have aye a bed to spare
For that gawsy cheild Guizot.'"

The "communal origin" of the piece, particularly of the coming and going of the "three days," as well as of the Queen's dislike to "thae puddock pies," which is expressed more than once, must be very plainly apparent to the supporters of Mr. Gummere's interesting theory.

Aytoun's victim and subsequent friend, Alexander Smith[1] (1830–67), was a native of Kilmarnock, and became a pattern-designer to trade. In 1853 he published in book form his *Life-Drama* (which had appeared in instalments in the *Critic*), and was immediately saluted as *the* new poet, not merely by the irresponsible persons who glory in the discovery of such fowl, but also by men of light and leading in their day. George Henry Lewes praised it warmly in the *Leader*, and George Gilfillan in the *Critic*. Nay, Mr. Herbert Spencer is believed to have been an admirer of Smith,[2] and Mr. George Meredith certainly was one. The reader may be curious to see the sonnet which the great novelist hailed as "the mighty warning of a poet's birth."

[1] See Memoir by P. P. Alexander, prefixed to *Last Leaves*, 1868.
[2] Espinasse, *Literary Recollections*, p. 397 *n*.

"I cannot deem why men toil so for Fame.
A porter is a porter, though his load
Be the oceaned world, and although his road
Be down the ages. What is in a name?
Ah! 'tis our spirits' curse to strive and seek.
Although its heart is rich in pearls and ores,
The sea complains upon a thousand shores;
Sea-like we moan for ever. We are weak.
We ever hunger for diviner stores.
I cannot say I have a thirsting deep
For human fame, nor is my spirit bowed
To be a mummy above ground to keep
For stare and handling of the vulgar crowd,
Defrauded of my natural rest and sleep."

These fourteen lines are indeed an epitome of Alexander Smith's merits and defects. One of them obstinately refuses to scan unless "world" be pronounced as a dissyllable. Two of them are more than ordinarily majestic and sonorous; and, of the rest, some are involved, some flat, and the remainder not merely undistinguished, but positively prosaic. The last line is as fine an example of the art of sinking as can anywhere be found out of a prize poem; and we have only to remember that Mr. Matthew Arnold had already published some of his most admirable sonnets to be amazed that the newcomer should receive so warm a welcome on the strength of such dubious promise.

As for the *Life-Drama*, it is difficult to take it as seriously as the critics took it half a century ago. It is incoherent; the characters are uninteresting or odious; and passages which are perhaps something more than excellent rhetoric are sandwiched between others which are certainly a good deal less. It is not for want of pains that the work has lost its spell. It bears all the traces of careful and anxious design. There has been a diligent—perhaps an agonised—search for the recondite epithet and the mouth-filling word. To read Smith, in short, is to be strangely reminded of certain minor poets of our own day who shall be nameless. But he

can never remain long upon any high level of accomplishment which he may have reached ; and he seems to have lacked the instinctive taste to preserve him from lapses into the mean or the absurd. In the following passage he displays greater "staying-power" than usual, but even here we find a hint of his characteristic faults :—

> "Sunset is burning like the seal of God
> Upon the close of day.—This very hour
> Night mounts her chariot in the eastern glooms
> To chase the flying Sun, whose flight has left
> Footprints of glory in the clouded west ;
> Swift is she haled by wingèd swimming steeds,
> Whose cloudy manes are wet with heavy dews,
> And dews are drizzling from her chariot wheels.
> Soft in her lap lies drowsy lidded Sleep,
> Brainful of dreams, as summer hive with bees ;
> And round her in the pale and spectral light
> Flock bats and grisly owls on noiseless wings.
> The flying sun goes down the burning west,
> Vast night comes noiseless up the eastern slope,
> And so the eternal chase goes round the world.
>
> Unrest ! Unrest ! The passion-panting sea
> Watches the unveiled beauty of the stars
> Like a great hungry soul. The unquiet clouds
> Break and dissolve, then gather in a mass,
> And float like mighty icebergs through the blue.
> Summers, like blushes, sweep the face of earth,
> Heaven yearns in stars. Down comes the frantic rain ;
> We hear the wail of the remorseful winds
> In their strange penance. And this wretched orb
> Knows not the taste of rest ; a maniac world,
> Homeless and sobbing through the deep she goes."

Never was adjective more happily applied than "spasmodic" to the class of poetry of which these lines are a favourable specimen. It is equally appropriate to the style and to the temper of *A Life-Drama ;* for here we have the very dregs of Byronism—a dish much appreciated, it should seem, by Smith's

generation. Yet what cannot genius construct out of the most unpromising materials? The morbid hero with gloomy imaginings, a selfish disposition, an irritable temperament, and loud-mouthed passions, was once more to be presented in imperishable form; and Tennyson, in *Maud*, succeeded in achieving what Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell had been merely fumbling at.

Smith never contrived to repeat the success of the *Life-Drama*, and the necessity of earning money to eke out the scanty emoluments of a small post conferred upon him in the University of Edinburgh ultimately drove him more and more into miscellaneous prose work. This impulse may possibly have been accelerated by the storm which arose over his *City Poems* (1857). He was accused of plagiarism; and the accusation was supported by the powerful apparatus of the double column. Such charges are seldom difficult to prove in a superficial manner; but there is no good reason to suppose that Smith had acted disingenuously, or otherwise than upon the admittedly excellent principle, *Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*. As a critic of literature he showed delicacy and insight rather than robustness and vigour. Failing health and overwork helped to deprive his writing of the freshness which atones for many other shortcomings. His best-known essay in criticism is an introduction to the Globe edition of Burns (1865). His one novel, *Alfred Hagart's Household* (1866), contains little that is really noteworthy. In the capacity of essayist, pure and simple, he attained some little reputation by his *Dreamthorp* (1863), but the tone and style convey the impression of artificiality, if not of affectation. The author seems to be striving to write not like himself, but like some one else: perhaps like Charles Lamb. The *Summer in Skye* (1865) is more felicitous, and testifies, if testimony be needed, to his intense enjoyment of nature.

David Gray[1] (1838–61) was born near Kirkintilloch, and

[1] *Poems*, ed. Glassford Bell, Glasgow, 1874.

educated at Glasgow with a view to the clerical profession. At the age of twenty-two he set out for London, where he found an appreciative and considerate patron in Lord Houghton —or Mr. Monckton Milnes, as he then was. He also became acquainted with Laurence Oliphant, then apparently at the beginning of a brilliant political career, and gained the friendship of Sydney Dobell. But before his poetical efforts could be placed before the world, he was carried off by a galloping consumption, to the assaults of which the privations he endured on his arrival in the capital had rendered a weak constitution peculiarly vulnerable. In 1862 his *Poems* were published, with a memoir by Mr. James Hedderwick of the Glasgow *Evening Citizen*, himself the author of *Lays of Middle Age* (1859).

The contents of the little volume show much poetical feeling and some poetical skill. They are not free from the "stiffness of the lettered Scot," and a faint air of being imitations of some distinguished model hangs about them all. This is especially true of *The Luggie*, the *pièce de résistance* of the book, a poem written in honour of the stream, called by that slightly ridiculous name, which flows past his birthplace. It is, indeed, allowed by Gray's last accomplished editor that *The Luggie* was "inspired partially by a careful perusal of Thomson's *Seasons* and Wordsworth's *Excursion*;" and there would be little exaggeration in saying that it was pure Thomson from beginning to end, with the exception of the Tennysonian mannerisms. Here is a passage in which the two streams of influence are shown curiously blended :—

> "For as the pilgrim on warm summer days
> Pacing the dusty highway, when he sees
> The limpid silver glide with liquid lapse
> Between the emerald banks—with inward throe
> Blesses the clear enticement and partakes
> (His hot face meeting its own counterpart
> Shadowy, from an unvoyageable sky),
> So would the people in those later days

Listen the singing of a country song,
A virelay of harmonious homeliness ;
These later days, when in most bookish rhymes
Dear blessed Nature is forgot, and lost
Her simple, unelaborate modesty."

The description of the curling match is thoroughly Thomsonian, and might easily pass for an extract from *Winter*. Had Gray lived a century earlier, he might have found a more congenial mode of expression for his thoughts and emotions in the literary vernacular. As it is, though his artifice is manifest, it is never disagreeable ; and even in the sequence of Sonnets, entitled *In the Shadows*, and written literally *intuitu mortis*, he is always frank and amiable ; never a mere trickster or *poseur*.

Very different is the verdict that must be returned with regard to Gray's friend and fellow-emigrant to London. Robert William Buchanan [1] (1841–1902) was a Scot by extraction, if not by actual birth. The highest expectations were at one time formed of his genius, and not altogether without reason. *Fra Giacomo*, for example, which is among his earliest poems, has considerable power, though it is marked by all the crudeness of youth. But whatever promise may have been held out by *Undertones* (1864) or *Idyls and Legends of Inverburn* (1865) seemed to be almost entirely quenched after the appearance of the *North Coast Poems* (1867). Buchanan had entered with considerable zest into the life of second- and third-rate "Bohemianism" for which London affords so many opportunities. He turned some of his experiences to tolerable account in his *London Poems* (1867), but he paid the penalty of becoming, to the tips of his fingers, what Wilson would have called a "Cockney" poet. The two stout volumes which contain his poetical writings bear witness to the industry of his pen ; but of all his verse, perhaps only three pieces may be remembered when the work of better poets has been

[1] *Complete Poetical Works*, 2 vols., 1901. See also *Robert Buchanan : Some Account of his Life*, &c. By Harriett Jay, 1903.

forgotten—*The Wake of Tim O'Hara*, *The Wedding of Shon Maclean*, and *Phil Blood's Leap*—and even these will chiefly be called to mind at smoking-concerts and in similar congregations. What he always seemed to be attempting to say has been said by Tennyson and Browning, by Mr. Kipling and Mr. Henley, but was never said by him. It was for no want of technical skill that Buchanan failed as a poet. In this respect he was well equipped, and the variety of his measures is extensive. The flaw in his composition was a deep-seated and irremediable insincerity.[1] Scarce a line he has written bears the true stamp of emotion. We need not, indeed, adopt the view of Firmilian that—

> "What we write
> Must be the reflex of the thing we know";

but the superficial knowledge of Greek mythology which enables a man to talk glibly of Prometheus and Dryads and Naiads and Fauns is a poor substitute either for genuine feeling or for that similitude of it which great poets are able to fashion. Buchanan can have imposed upon nobody. He was always, and particularly in his later years, a great lasher of the vices of the age. The haste to be rich, the inordinate lust of gold, the discrepancy between Christian theory and practice, were chastised with abundance of acrimony and strong language. If indomitable pugnacity, shrillness of rhetoric, and the desire to be "nasty" all round, could make a satirist, then had Buchanan been a master of his craft. But it so happened that he was less effective and impressive even than Churchill. Stern moralists who desire their denunciations of avarice to be taken seriously should endeavour to avoid becoming bankrupt through unsuccessful speculation on the turf; and the radical

[1] As a poet of "revolt" against the *status quo*, he cannot be compared with James Thomson (1834–82), a native of Port-Glasgow, whose striking *City of Dreadful Night* (1874) is the unquestionable offspring of despair and the narcotic habit.

vice which we have noted in Buchanan as a poet was unfortunately made patent in the public prints for all to see and note. Neither his novels nor his plays are of the smallest consequence as literature. But he at least achieved a triumphant success in adding two new chapters to the voluminous history in which are recorded the quarrels of authors. By means of a magazine article, signed "Thomas Maitland," in which he assailed *The Fleshly School of Poetry*, and, *eodem contextu*, extolled his own performances, he drew from Mr. Swinburne an extremely rich and "fruity" specimen of that poet's early polemical manner;[1] and by means of a similar attack upon "society" journalism, he elicited from Edmund Yates a retort which deserves to be treasured among the curiosities, if not among the disgraces, of journalism.[2]

It would be difficult to conceive of a stronger contrast to Robert Buchanan in point of straightforwardness and sincerity than Walter Chalmers Smith[3] (b. 1824), probably the most considerable Scottish poet of the generation which produced his namesake Alexander. Not that Dr. Smith's literary activity was confined to the period of which we are here particularly treating; for *North Country Folk* (1883) contains some of his strongest work, and the *Ballads from Scottish History* published for the first time in the collected edition of his poems (1902) demonstrate that even in his old age he retains much of the true imaginative fire. But what is decidedly his best poem, *Olrig Grange* (1872), belongs to the era with which this chapter is concerned, and, further, in his modes of thought Dr. Smith belongs essentially to the third quarter of the nineteenth century. He is in full revolt against the strict creed of Calvinism, yet materialism is equally repugnant to his temperament. His doctrine is that amiable, yet earnest, latitudinarianism which found its highest poetical

[1] *Under the Microscope*, 1872.

[2] Consult the file of the *World* newspaper, September, 1877.

[3] *Poetical Works.* Revised by the Author. 1902.

expression in Tennyson, and the significance of Dr. Smith for us is that he, a Free Kirk minister, and a future moderator of the Free Assembly, marks as no one else does—not even Robert Lee, or Principal Story, or Norman Macleod—the loosening in Scotland of the old Evangelical fetters, the relaxation of the old rigid ideas of the "scheme of redemption." Perhaps it is for this very reason that his earlier poems, after winning a large share of popularity on their first appearance, have sunk into an oblivion from which they well deserve to emerge.

The dramatic monologue is Dr. Smith's favourite convention, and by means of it, and of connecting passages inserted by way of explanation and comment, he tells the tale of his longer poems. Only one of his works, *Kildrostan* (1884), is in actual dramatic form ; and it is a comparative failure. But the monologue he uses with conspicuous power and with excellent effect: witness *The Confession of Annaple Gowdie*, *Witch*, in *The Bishop's Walk* (1861), his first volume, though it must be remembered that Dr. Smith did not burst into poetry until he had reached an age at which experience has already arrived to the aid of imagination. To handle the monologue satisfactorily there are requisite a knowledge of the human heart and a wide sympathy. Dr. Smith has both; he tries hard to do justice even to lairds and Episcopalians, though sometimes with indifferent success. But no one can deny that he enters with really deep insight into the point of view of the half-dozen characters who play their part in the story of *Olrig Grange;* the lover, the girl who is forced to marry against her will, her mother, her father, and so forth. The portrait of the squire is perhaps the pick of the gallery. Married to a wife, who combined in an eminent degree worldly ambition with evangelical piety (an admirably limned personage this also, by the way),

> "He took to Science, made experiments,
> Bought many nice and costly instruments,

Heard lectures, and believed he understood
Beetle-browed Science wrestling with the fact
To find its meaning clear; but all in vain.
He thought he thought, and yet he did not think,
But only echo'd still the common thought,
As might an empty room."

The Tennysonian cadence is once more audible. Yet there is so much weight and substance in what Dr. Smith has to say that such unconscious reproductions of manner may readily be pardoned. It is, perhaps, the very intensity with which he enters into his characters, and places himself in the circumstances in which they are situated, that militates most against his being a poet of the highest order. Unlike Mr. Browning, whose method his own so nearly resembles, he lacks the gift of song; and his warmest admirers must own that the lyrics with which, for example, *Borland Hall* (1874) is freely studded, are not his best work. Moreover, he becomes so absorbed in his theme, that he is apt to be a little careless of the mint, and cumin, and anise of poetry. In other language, his technique is imperfect. The word that comes under stress of thought and emotion is sometimes, not merely not the right word, but a palpably wrong one;[1] and faulty rhymes are too common. Yet something more than ruggedness or a want of merely technical finish seems to conspire towards his exclusion from the first rank. *What Pilate thought of it* is good, sound, honest work: a thousand times superior to anything of which Robert Buchanan was capable: but it is not quite the best work. And so too it is impossible to help feeling that, while *Hilda's Diary* in *Hilda among the broken Gods* (1878) comes extraordinarily near to being a masterpiece in feminine psychology, it wants that indescribable and indefinable something which raises effort to the dignity of achievement. With all his limitations, however,

[1] A curious illustration will be found in *Deacon Dorat's Story*, where the necessity of finding a rhyme to "links" compels the poet to speak of "the golfing *rinks*": a wholly inept expression.

both of thought and of style, Dr. Smith is a stamp of poet, which no country, however plenteously endowed with indisputable genius, can afford not to be grateful for. And assuredly Scotland has not been so prolific of great poets in recent years as to render the prayer superfluous that, in time to come, she may be richly blessed with men as highly gifted, as sincere, and as strenuous, as Walter Smith.

There is a certain resemblance between the poetry of Dr. Smith and that of his contemporary George Macdonald[1] (b. 1824), also an Aberdeenshire man. In both we see the rebellion against Calvinism with its austere attitude of mind and soul, and the desire for a less severe conception of the Deity. But the resemblance is, at most, superficial. Dr. Smith is essential virile in tone ; and the delights of minute introspection are not for him. Mr. Macdonald, with rather superior technical accomplishment, revels in probing the religious emotions, and in analysing his own sentiments towards his Maker. Few things more morbid were produced even in the middle-Victorian period than *The Disciple*. Dr. Smith makes his appeal to the general mass of readers ; Mr. Macdonald makes *his* to what may be called the superior religious public : the body of people who crave for something essentially devotional, which shall nevertheless be free from the taint of vulgarity, and possess, if possible, an aroma of education and "culture." The unction and zeal of the street-preacher must for them be tempered by a show of independence of thought, and the raptures of the converted cobbler expressed in the dialect of refinement and good taste. A little cheap "mysticism" will go a long way towards conciliating the good-will of such persons ; and it must be owned that Mr. Macdonald provides them with a generous repast both in the numerous poems which deal professedly with sacred subjects and in those which deal with children. When he

[1] *Poetical Works*, 2 vols., 1893.

essays a more familiar vein, as in *The Donkey to the Horse*, he is singularly unsuccessful; nor has he made much of his songs and ballads in the Scottish vernacular, though of course they are better than the effusions of the average local bard. It is, indeed, difficult for him who takes no particular interest in the mode in which Mr. Macdonald handles his themes to be rapturous over his poetry. Such an one can but recognise that what to him seems merely gushing, appeals to many fellow-creatures, and that in Mr. Macdonald's poetical writings, from that ostensible drama, *Within and Without* (1856), downwards, there is much which both edifies and charms a number of people. Of any real grip of human life or character he must confess to perceiving nothing in the poems. The novels are another matter (*infra*, p. 617).

Charles Mackay [1] (1814–89) had a considerable popular lyrical gift. "The lyrics of this British Béranger," wrote Douglas Jerrold, "have gone home to the hearts of the people." Nor were those of his contemporaries who were in sympathy with his political views averse from lauding his more ambitious efforts such as *The Salamandrine* (1842) and *Egeria* (1850). The plan of the latter was pronounced by the *St. James's Magazine* to be "airy and elegant. In this poem the poet discusses through his characters a variety of subjects not in the mystical language of the dreamer or the speculatist, but with the calm assurance of ascertained truth." [2] Hence, no doubt, the opinion that "the Charles Mackays and the Thomas Hoods tread on better and steadier ground than the Tennysons and Brownings." But though the assurance

[1] *Selected Poems and Songs*, 1888.

[2] I cannot resist quoting the following gem from the same source: "Scotland has had many poets. Thomas of Ercildoune, Barbour, Dunbar, Drummond, Mickle, Ramsay, Beattie, Macpherson, Burns, Campbell, Scott, Aytoun, are names which the world will not willingly let die. To this list must be added Charles Mackay: if not the greatest, certainly second to none amongst them all." Truly the early Victorian eulogists had as little false delicacy about "laying it on thick" as those of our own age.

which we observe in Mackay's philosophical poems does not strike us now as being that of ascertained truth, it would be gross injustice to deny a share of merit to less pretentious pieces, like *The Founding of the Bell*, or *Tubal Cain*, which used deservedly to find their way into all anthologies for the young. As for *Cheer, boys, cheer!* and *There's a good time coming, boys*, they immediately justified their existence by catching the popular fancy, and not even Robert Brough appealed more successfully than Mackay to the taste of a day when the millennium was believed to be close at hand, if only "men of thought and men of action" would obey the exhortation to "clear the way!" That Mackay became less of a "democraw" as he grew older may be inferred from poems like his version of *A man's a man for a' that*, or *Gutterslush: maker of Parliaments*.[1] In his time he had many opportunities for expounding his views as a contributor to the *Morning Chronicle* in the 'forties, and subsequently as editor of the *Glasgow Argus*, and of the *Illustrated London News* from 1851 to 1859. His reminiscences of active journalism and of his literary life in London are embodied in *Forty Years' Recollections* (1877) and *Through the long Day* (1887): works of considerable interest, and not unduly egotistical.

John Stuart Blackie[2] (1809–95), though a very indifferent poet, contrived, in the course of a long life, to make a great deal of noise in his little world. On the strength of occupying the Greek chair in the University of Edinburgh, he published *Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece* (1857) which are little better than doggerel, and translated the *Iliad* (1866). A volume of *Lyrical Poems* appeared in 1860, and of *Lays of the Highlands and Islands* in 1872. In the preface to his *Songs of Religion and Life* (1876), he remarks that the composition of

[1] The latter is contained in a posthumous volume, *Gossamer and Snow-drift* (1890) edited by the poet's son, Eric Mackay (1851–99), himself the author of *Love-letters of a Violinist* (1886), which attracted some attention.

[2] *Life*, by Miss Stoddart, 2 vols. Edin., 1895.

his serious poems "has been a source of intellectual enlargement and moral elevation to myself," which is quite possibly the case. Yet his thought is not deep, and the judicious deist, suspicious of his boisterous latitudinarianism, will scarcely thank him for such an explanation of the existence of evil as that

> "The wicked and the weak are but the steps
> Whereon the wise shall mount to see Thy face."

In an orthodox writer such a view would be denounced as savouring of arid and heartless cynicism. But good taste and delicacy of feeling were never Mr. Blackie's forte, or even his foible. He describes Socrates as a "jolly old Grecian," and the spectacle of high mass in Cologne Cathedral inspires nought save a denunciation of the

> "Crew
> Of swine-faced mummers, fleshy, fat, and red,"

who are performing the rite. Probably his so-called sonnets are his most absurd performances. His most celebrated prose-work, *Self Culture* (1874), contains precisely the sort of maxims and reflections which might naturally be expected in a book with such a title. There was more feeling for nature and for poetry in the little finger of John Campbell Shairp[1] (1819–85), Principal of the United College of St. Leonard and St. Salvator, than in the whole of Mr. Blackie's composition. Yet it rarely found adequate or satisfactory expression except in one or two pieces, such as *The Bush aboon Traquair*, and a poem on *Balliol Scholars*,[2] which contains things that Mr. Matthew Arnold need not have been ashamed to own. Peculiarly felicitous are the lines descriptive of Arnold himself, Frederick

[1] See Knight, *Principal Shairp and his Friends* (1888).

[2] To be found in *Glen Desseray and other poems*, ed. Palgrave, 1886.

Temple, and James Riddell. As a critic,[1] Principal Shairp was disposed to take somewhat narrow views. He was thoroughly sound and sympathetic in dealing with congenial writers like Wordsworth or Keble, but the range of his appreciation did not extend far beyond those who, directly or indirectly, appeared to him to make for edification. Thus his monograph on Burns (1879) has justly been regarded as one of the worst of the series to which it belongs, and indeed his criticism of *The Jolly Beggars* is a monument of ineptitude. His best piece of prose is the admirable sketch of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, contributed to Dr. Hanna's collection of Erskine's *Letters* (1877–78). Isa Craig or Knox[2] (*b.* 1831) possessed a thin and inoffensive vein of poetry, which won some temporary renown by enabling her to carry off the prize offered by the managers of the Crystal Palace for an *Ode* on Burns on the occasion of the centenary of his birth. The poetical exercises of Sir Joseph Noel Paton[3] (1821–1901), though they attracted some attention, never succeeded in overshadowing his high reputation as a painter.

The muse of Thomas Tod Stoddart[4] (1810-80), though in early life she suffered much from green-sickness, became robust and healthy, through leading an open-air life. The character of his youthful plunge into verse is sufficiently indicated by the title-page of the little volume,[5] for the promise thus held out is amply redeemed by the contents. The rhymed heroics in which it is written are original and good, but on the whole we may be thankful that Mr. Stoddart abandoned the *macabre*, and took to celebrating in verse the pastime, or, rather, the occupation, of his life. His *Songs of the Seasons*

[1] See *The Poetic Interpretation of Nature* (1877); *Aspects of Poetry* (1881); and *Sketches in History and Poetry* (1887).

[2] *Duchess Agnes*, 1864. [3] *Poems by a Painter*, 1861; *Spindrift*, 1876.

[4] See *Memoir*, by his daughter, prefixed to *Angling Songs*, Edin., 1889.

[5] *The Death-Wake, or Lunacy. A necromaunt in three chimaeras* 1831. New edition, ed. Lang, 1895.

(1881) and *Angling Songs* (originally published in 1839) are not all of equal merit, but there will be found among them what is perhaps the best song that was ever written in connection with the art of fishing.

"A birr! A whirr! a salmon's on,
A goodly fish! A thumper!
Bring up, bring up, the ready gaff,
And if we land him, we will quaff
Another glorious bumper!
Hark! 'tis the music of the reel,
The strong, the quick, the steady;
The line darts from the active wheel,
Have all things right and ready.

A birr! A whirr! the salmon's out,
Far on the rushing river;
Onward he holds with sudden leap,
Or plunges through the whirlpool deep,
A desperate endeavour!
Hark to the music of the reel,
The fitful and the grating;
It pants along the breathless wheel,
Now hurried—now abating.

A birr! A whirr! the salmon's in,
Upon the bank extended;
The princely fish is gasping slow,
His brilliant colours come and go,
All beautifully blended.
Hark to the music of the reel!
It murmurs and it closes;
Silence is on the conquering wheel,
Its wearied line reposes."[1]

Alexander Nicolson[2] (1827–9), the Celt of Skye, had much less mastery of poetical ways and means than Stoddart, the Borderer. Only once or twice did he succeed in serious poetry: once, certainly, in his lines on *Skye*, and again in his

[1] From *The Taking of the Salmon*, by Thomas Tod Stoddart
[2] *Verses*, with *Memoir*, by Walter Smith, D.D., Edin., 1893.

octosyllabics on *Ardmillan, 1871*. In a lighter strain he was fluent and tolerably easy, as *The Beautiful Isle of Skye* bears witness; and one cannot help regretting that he did not more diligently cultivate that mixed vein in which humour blends with bitterness. The parody of *Sam Hall*, which his editor, most unfortunately, felt compelled to bowdlerise, exhibits traces of a latent though decided turn for the sardonic which might have been the parent of much good literature. In point of smoothness and finish, however, Nicolson is inferior to William John MacQuorn Rankine [1] (1820–72) at his best, as in *The Coachman of the "Skylark"*; much more to George Outram [2] (1805–56), and Charles Neaves [3] (1800–76). Much of Outram's wit can make but little appeal to the general public, for his topics are chiefly legal. But to those privileged to understand, few things seem better of their kind than *The Annuity*, *Soumin' and Roumin'*, and *Cessio Bonorum*—the last a peculiarly happy parody of Skinner's exhilarating lyric. Lord Neaves does not disdain professional subjects either, and *The Tourist's Matrimonial Guide through Scotland* has been quoted in the English courts as containing the clearest and most compendious statement of the law of Scotland with respect to marriage.[4] But he also deals with matters of more general interest, and there are few questions which agitated the 'sixties in literature or science which did not receive some accession of gaiety from his brilliant wit and faultless technique as exhibited in the pages of *Maga*. *The Memory of Monboddo*, *How to make a Novel*, *Hey for Social Science*, *O!*, *The Permissive Bill*, and *I'm very fond of Water*, suggest themselves as among the choicest specimens of his art; but I scarcely think it will be denied by those who care for such things that *Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter* (a parody on

[1] *Songs and Fables*, Glasgow, 1874.
[2] *Legal and other Lyrics* (originally printed *circ.* 1851), 1888.
[3] *Songs and Verses, Social and Scientific*, 1875.
[4] See *MacCormac* v. *MacCormac*, in the *Times*, July 16, 1899.

Roy's Wife) is his masterpiece; and I trust it is no effect of undue partiality to rank this with the best humorous and satirical poetry which can be found in our language. It should be added that Lord Neaves was the author of a little monograph on the *Greek Anthology* (1874) which bears incontrovertible testimony alike to his scholarship and to his taste.

In the domain of prose it is not unnatural to begin with fiction; and here we shall find that matters stand very much as they do in the realm of poetry. As in this there is no one (*pace* Douglas Jerrold) on a level with Browning and Tennyson, so in that we cannot boast a Dickens or a Thackeray. Yet much good stuff of the second order was produced, and we can point to one who if not the superior was at least the equal of Trollope, whom she closely resembled in her business-like methods of work.

Probably the most industrious writer in the British Isles during the second half of the nineteenth century was Margaret Oliphant Wilson, or Oliphant [1] (1828–97), a native of Wallyford, near Prestonpans. Left a widow in 1859, with three small children, some household furniture, and close upon £1,000 of debt, she betook herself for a livelihood to literature, in which she had already had some practice. Thenceforward the pen was never out of her fingers, and the fresh obligations which she assumed from time to time were met by redoubled exertions. She was an indefatigable contributor to *Maga*, and had the great merit of being able to turn her hand to almost any subject.[2] Her work may be said to have been accomplished by the time of her death. She went down to the grave a solitary and broken-hearted woman. Yet if to some extent she had outlived her vogue as a novelist, she was

[1] *Autobiography*, ed. Coghill, 1899. See also *Blackwood's Magazine*, September, 1897, April, 1898, May, 1899.

[2] A list of her books and of her *Blackwood* articles will be found at the end of the *Autobiography*.

fortunate in not having outlived her powers of mind, and in being able to reserve much of her best for the very end of the feast. Her *Annals of a Publishing House* [1]—the history of the firm of publishers which had stood her friend in the hour of her direst need—is unrivalled as a repository of literary information as to the period which it covers. Never have Lockhart and Wilson, in all their strength and all their weakness, been so vividly brought before the reader's eye. And her posthumous *Autobiography* is so candid and affecting a piece of self-revelation that the only work with which it suggests comparison is the *Journal* of Sir Walter Scott.

There are probably few people in existence (and the present writer is not one of them) who can truthfully profess to have read the whole of Mrs. Oliphant's writings. Nor is there much in her mere style to induce one to try any among them save those reputed to be her best. Though less slovenly than Trollope, she had much of that "middle-Victorian" carelessness about trifles of grammar and syntax which, after constant repetition, becomes irritating even to those who are no pedants or precisians. Much of her journey-work is consequently tame and uninspiring; and the old-fashioned common sense which saturated all her views of literature and life is not presented in a very attractive guise. Where so much work had to be got through, a high degree of finish was perhaps impossible. Whether with more leisure she would ever have produced anything of the very first order is a question on which she herself was accustomed ruefully to speculate, and to which it is impossible to give a decided answer. Her literary ideals were high, and she was well aware how far she fell short of them. Nothing provoked her more than to be praised for her "industry," and, without giving herself any of the preposterous airs and graces affected by writers of a younger generation, she knew that mere diligence in one's calling is not everything. Yet it is probably safer to be

[1] 2 vols., 1897. A third volume was added by Mrs. Porter in 1898.

thankful for what she gave than to lament that circumstances prevented her legacy from being greater; and there can be small doubt that she lost little or nothing by the want of that environment of the "mental greenhouse" in which the literary existence of George Eliot was passed. In point of personality and character there is no comparison between the two women, so manifestly superior in these respects is the lesser genius to the greater. But in truth Mrs. Oliphant set such an example to the members of her sex engaged in the vocation of literature as can scarcely be valued too highly in an age in which self-advertisement bids fair to displace self-respect.

Mrs. Oliphant, though in many ways characteristically Scotch, became thoroughly acclimatised in England, and many of her most satisfying works of fiction are set in a scene purely and typically English. In *Salem Chapel* (1863) and the other *Chronicles of Carlingford*, she did for an English provincial town what she never quite did for any similar community in the land of her birth. To praise them should be superfluous; yet to pass by *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866) without a word of comment were unjust. Long as it is, it may be doubted if it could with advantage be shorter; for it is nothing less than a masterly analysis of that intricate and baffling subject, the female heart. The most approved latter-day experts in psychology would have much to be proud of if they could rival this masterpiece of Mrs. Oliphant's. And not only did she achieve triumphs in this department—Julia Herbert in *The Wizard's Son* (1884), and Phœbe Beecham in *Phœbe Junior* (1876), are among them—but she also possessed the great secret of providing her scenes and characters with the appropriate atmosphere. Nothing is incongruous or impertinent: everything is of a piece. The setting is equally successful whether the story is placed in the heart of England, as in *A Rose in June* (1874) and *Carita* (1877), or in a French country town, as in *A Beleaguered City* (1880), or on the

eastern shores of Fife, as in *Katie Stewart* (1854), which, considered as a work of art, is probably her supreme effort.

None of Mrs. Oliphant's work in later years was more popular than that which dealt with the supernatural. The *Beleagured City* is certainly an admirable specimen of its class, and scarcely less excellent are the ghostly tales which for several winters in succession appeared in *Blackwood*—*Old Lady Mary*, *The Land of Darkness*, *On the Dark Mountains*, and others.[1] But I am inclined to question whether Mrs. Oliphant was really at her best in such pieces. In those which deal with the future life, either her pathos is too exquisitely poignant, as, for instance, in the *Little Pilgrim* (1882), or else she just misses the note of horror which belongs to our conceptions of Tartarus. Similarly, in her ghost-stories proper, she falls short of the perfection to which the first Lord Lytton once attained. Thus she appears to me to be in a happier vein in her novels of ordinary Scottish life, from *Margaret Maitland* (1849) down to *Kirsteen* (1890). Some, to be sure, are better than others. *The Minister's Wife* (1869) is unduly protracted, and occasionally we come across characters who are either exaggerated, like Pat Torrance in the otherwise delightful *Ladies Lindores* (1883), or glaringly conventional, like some of her Scotch servants. But *Margaret Maitland* itself is an extraordinary book for a girl of twenty-one to have written, and when we review the whole series of which it was the precursor, we find that Mrs. Oliphant had an intimate knowledge of most classes of her countrymen, and that she was able to portray them with fidelity and spirit. The same qualities of sympathy, of insight into character, and of acquaintance with the *monde* of which she wrote, stood her in good stead in her biographical work. The *Life of Edward Irving* (1862) is a remarkably fine performance. The halo of mysticism surrounding that extraordinary person was far from

[1] Some of these have been collected in a volume under the title of *Stories of the Seen and of the Unseen* (1902).

uncongenial to Mrs. Oliphant's temperament, and she handles her theme with enthusiasm, though always with judgment and a sense of proportion. In her youth, as *Margaret Maitland* shows, Mrs. Oliphant's sympathies had been strongly on the side of those who left the Church in 1843. Her investigations into Irving's history probably left her less enamoured of that party than she had once been; and her short monograph on *Thomas Chalmers* (1893) shows how far, towards the close of her life, she had drifted away from her early prepossessions. In Principal Tulloch, who was certainly no mystic, she found a subject which otherwise thoroughly suited her pen. But her *Memoir* (1888) of that divine, as well as her *Memoirs of Laurence Oliphant* (1891), a distant cousin of her own, cannot be compared for force and vigour to the *Irving*, although both are respectable compilations, and the *Oliphant* is conspicuous for tact and discretion where both qualities were emphatically needed.

The novels of Mr. George Macdonald are, in a sense, more disappointing than his poetry, for they contain so much good work that they ought to be a great deal better than they are. Some are spoiled by an excessive infusion of the mysterious, the supernatural, or the allegorical. *Lilith* (1895), to select an illustration, is tedious and unintelligible, though scarcely more so than *Phantastes* (1858). Others suffer from having as a background some spot in which the author appears to be less at home than an author should be amid the scenery he selects. *The Sea-board Parish* (1868), for example, the scene of which is pitched in the south of England, is not comparable for vividness and force to the novels whose action takes place in the north of Scotland. In order to do himself justice, Mr. Macdonald requires to have his foot firmly planted on his native heath; but even his Aberdeenshire stories are spoiled by the tendency to sheer preaching. The characters chop theology a great deal too much for the reader's entertainment: the amiable theology of the latitudinarian who has

conceived an intense dislike to the Shorter Catechism. We suspect that the eponymous hero of *David Elginbrod* (1862) is only saved from becoming a bore by his untimely death, a fate which, unfortunately, does not overtake MacLear, the cobbler, in *Salted with Fire* (1897). A more prosy, bumptious, dictatorial, and (in reality) censorious personage than the "soutar" cannot easily be found, though the boyish hero of *Sir Gibbie* (1880)—a novel which contains much that is quite excellent—runs him close. Mr. Macdonald's plots are never very coherent or probable. The whole intrigue of *David Elginbrod* is altogether beyond credibility, in so far as it can be followed. But looseness of construction is more pardonable than lachrymose sentiment and long-winded harangues.

When all due allowance, however, has been made for these defects, the fact remains that Mr. Macdonald has given us many admirable pictures of north-country life and character. The majority of these will be found in *David Elginbrod*, *Alec Forbes* (1865), and *Robert Falconer* (1868), which are named in the ascending order of merit. In the first-named, the sketches of the Laird and his wife—they are no more than sketches—are wonderfully true to life. In the second, Thomas Crann, the mason, is a well-conceived and well-drawn character, despite his occasional prosiness, and Robert Bruce, the village grocer, who represents a very different type, is even better. But it is in *Robert Falconer* that Mr. Macdonald's gift shows to the highest advantage. The second half of the book is naught: the first, which deals with Robert's boyhood, is not unworthy to be compared with those wonderful chapters in *The Mill on the Floss* which describe the childhood of Maggie Tulliver. It abounds with characters that are the "real thing." Robert's grandmother, her handmaiden Betty, the Miss Napiers of the Boar's Head Hotel, "Shargar," Mr. Lammie, "Dooble Sanny" (another "soutar"), and Robert himself—all are first-rate; and there is a freshness in the descriptions of life and manners at Rothieden

which contrasts very favourably with the jaded fancy displayed in the latter portion of the book. The atmosphere is extraordinarily well reproduced, and the Scots of the dialect seems to be unusually pure, racy, and idiomatic. Mr. Macdonald's touch is altogether different from that of Galt; yet in one or two passages it would be unfair to say that he falls short of that great master. That he is superior to most of those who in a later generation revived the novel of Scottish life need scarce be said. Didactic he may be, and indeed is. His vein of humour may be a trifle thin. His moral reflections may not be characterised by originality or point. But he has innate delicacy and refinement; and, at his worst and most provoking, he is incapable of the eccentricities of the latter-day "Kailyard" school. No less their superior in accuracy of observation was William Alexander (1826–94), editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, whose *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk* (1871), a study of Aberdeenshire life and manners, achieved a success never equalled by the author in any other effort.

To the delineation of another stratum of society Catherine Sinclair (1800–64), a daughter of Sir John of the first *Statistical Account* (1791), applied herself with industry and with fairly satisfactory results. *Modern Accomplishments* (1836) and *Modern Flirtations* (1841), which are only two out of many novels, rally the fashions of their hour with a good deal of vivacity. Their great defect is one which Miss Sinclair shares with Miss Ferrier: the tendency to moralise and preach. This drawback is not absent even from *Holiday House*,[1] which nevertheless is one of the very best children's books ever written. No child can wish for better company than Harry and Laura, than Mrs. Crabtree and Uncle Frank, than Lord Rockville and Peter Gray. The novels of George John Whyte-Melville (1821–78), which are chiefly concerned with "the sport of kings" and with country life generally, obtained a well-deserved

[1] No authority seems to know the date of its original publication: not even the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

popularity, not yet apparently exhausted. Laurence William Maxwell Lockhart (1831–82), a nephew of John Gibson Lockhart's, who acted as a correspondent of the *Times* in the Franco-German war, had also much of the lightness of hand essential to the novel of manners. *Doubles and Quits* (1869) is, indeed, farce rather than comedy, though farce of the best; but *Fair to See* (1871) stands on a higher pedestal, and it is difficult to call to mind any subsequent work of fiction which handles so felicitously the humorous side of life in Scotland. The Clyde steamboat; the Highland games; and the ball in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms—these are among the scenes described with equal truth and vivacity, and once read not easily to be forgotten. Lockhart attempted a somewhat loftier flight in *Mine is Thine* (1878), but the essay was not wholly successful; and his versatility of talent is far more advantageously displayed in the anapæsts addressed to John Blackwood, in which he narrates his vision of the medal day at St. Andrews.[1] The present Lord Moncreiff (b. 1840) can vie with Lockhart in gaiety and nimbleness of wit, but most of his stories lie anonymous in the volumes of the *Cornhill* or *Maga*, and are not readily accessible to the general. Cleverer than these with his pen—cleverer perhaps than any contemporary Scot—was Laurence Oliphant[2] (1829–88). There was little in the literature of ironical presentation of character to which the author of *Piccadilly* (1870) and *Altiora Peto* (1883) might not have aspired. But, starting life with the ball "teed" for him, as it were, he became a follower of strange gods, or, at least, prophets, and deliberately blasted a career of singular promise.

In dexterity of touch William Black[3] (1841–98) could no more compete with Laurence Lockhart than he could compete with Laurence Oliphant in knowledge of the

[1] These will be found in the late Mr. Robert Clark's *Golf*, 2nd ed., 1893, p. 271.

[2] *Memoirs*, by Mrs. Oliphant, 1891.

[3] *William Black, a Biography*, by Wemyss Reid, 1902.

world and incisiveness of intellect. But for many years he was the darling of the circulating libraries, whose patrons he supplied with the very thing they hungered for. At one time a journalist in London, he won his first success in fiction, after one or two tentative efforts, with *A Daughter of Heth* in 1871. It is a work in some respects of genuine merit. The effect of contrast produced by the introduction of a French girl into the *milieu* of a West country manse is perhaps a little crude; but at least it is an effect. The sunrises and sunsets have not yet become mechanical, which, later on, were to be turned out decked in the frank garishness of a chromo-lithograph. Also there is a pleasant freshness and good-nature in the sketches of country life. Yet an air of unreality—of the purely theatrical—pervades the work as a whole, and we feel such characters as "The Whaup" and "Coquette" to be stagey and conventional. There is a peacefulness about *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton* (1872) —a freedom from sham passion—a cessation from yachting—which, it may well be thought, place it at the head of Mr. Black's works: above even the popular *Madcap Violet* (1876), or the ambitious and by no means wholly futile *Macleod of Dare* (1878). As for the productions of the last decade of his life, they are little better than "cauld kail het again": impulsive tomboys, Highland seas, polychromic sunsets. To predict immortality for Mr. Black's writings were hazardous. They will do well if they enjoy as long a life as that once familiar "yellowback," *The Romance of War* (1846), which, alone of innumerable novels and compilations, preserves the name of a prolific writer, James Grant (1822–87).

There may possibly have been ages in which the line of demarcation between fiction and history has not been very clearly marked; but the period of which we are now treating was not one of them in so far as Scotland is concerned. None, perhaps, of our historians belong to the front rank; but none, we may say with equal confidence, was capable of distorting facts to

suit his own convenience or taste. The eager and impetuous Mark Napier (1798–1879) may be violent in his expressions, and the inferences he draws may be hasty or ill-founded ;[1] but neither in his *Memoirs of Montrose* (1856), nor in his *Memorials of Claverhouse* (1859–62) is he guilty of misrepresentation, though we might wish him rather less diffuse and rather more expert in the matter of marshalling his evidence. The same negative compliment may be paid to John Hill Burton (1809–81), who, despite his limitations, was capable of taking a much broader and more philosophical view of historical events than Napier. Born in Aberdeen, he early became engaged in literary, or quasi-literary, work in Edinburgh, and may conceivably have had a share in moulding into its familiar form the Scotch "Whitaker," familiarly known as "Oliver and Boyd." His first important work was the admirable and delightful *Life and Correspondence of David Hume* (1846), and his turn for biography, though on a different scale, was further illustrated in the following year by his *Lives of Simon Lord Lovat and Duncan Forbes of Culloden*. Like Hume, he began to write the *History of Scotland* at the end, so to speak ; two volumes dealing with the period from the Revolution to the extinction of the rising in the '45 having appeared in 1853. The tract of time from Agricola's invasion to the Revolution was disposed of in 1867.[2] It is upon this work that Burton's celebrity exists. The *History of the Reign of Queen Anne* (1880) is but a poor substitute for the book which Thackeray at one time meant to write ; and both *The Book-Hunter* (1860)[3] and *The Scot Abroad* (1862), though exceedingly good in their way (and an excellent way it is), are not of the same calibre as the *History*. That Burton was an ideal historian it would be absurd to pretend. His style is some-

[1] He is generally thought to have had the worst of it in the controversy which he carried on (1863–70) with, *inter alios*, Dr. Stewart, of Glasserton, as to the Wigtown martyrs.

[2] The whole *History* was republished in 8 vols. in 1873.

[3] New ed., with Memoir by his widow, 1882.

times pedantic and often mean; he drops into the sesquipedalian words so dear to the Scotch votaries of "rhetoric and belles lettres;" he is apt to dwell on non-essentials; and he never rises to the height of the opportunities which his subject afforded him. But if he was immeasurably inferior in point of language and manner to Mr. Froude, he had the advantage of him in accuracy, and the sly Aberdonian wit in which he occasionally permits himself to indulge is thoroughly effective in its proper place. He was both industrious and learned; he was as fair as a decided Whig and anti-ecclesiastical bias would suffer him to be; and, although he has not said the last word on any controversial topic arising out of his theme, it would be rash to assert that he has been wholly superseded by more recent inquirers.

Sir William Stirling Maxwell[1] (1818–78) was probably the most complete realisation in his time of James Hannay's ideal of "blood and culture." His *Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V.* (1852) and his posthumous *Don John of Austria* (1883) are works in which research goes hand in hand with ease and beauty of style; while the versatility of his mind is demonstrated by the *Annals of the Artists in Spain*[2] (1848), infinitely superior in taste and judgment to many much-vaunted essays in the criticism of Art which made their appearance during the same decade. William Forbes Skene (1809–92) was destitute of Sir William's charm; but his *Celtic Scotland* (1876–80) is still the chief authority upon a thorny and obscure subject, and in his other works he seems to occupy a place midway between the historian proper and the antiquary. To the latter category belonged that worthy disciple of Thomas Thomson, Cosmo Innes (1798–1874), whose *Scotland in the Middle Ages* (1860) and *Sketches of Early Scotch History* (1861) are held in high esteem, and whose *Scotch Legal Antiquities* (1872) is simply indispensable to the student who

[1] *Works*, 6 vols., 1891.

[2] A portion of this was expanded into *Velasquez and his Works*, 1855.

is being "entered" at the investigation of his country's remote history and the examination of her institutions. The *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ* (1866–71) of Hew Scott (1791–1872), minister of Anstruther Wester, is one of the most gigantic as well as valuable undertakings in research ever brought to a successful conclusion by the labour of one man. The greatest of all Scottish antiquaries, however, from a literary point of view, was Joseph Robertson (1810–66), a native of Aberdeenshire, who edited the *Edinburgh Courant* from 1849 to 1853, and thereafter was curator of the Historical Department of the Register House in Edinburgh. To well-nigh unfathomable and universal erudition [1] he added a skill in writing which has rarely been equalled by men of his tastes; and it may be questioned whether he was ever surpassed in the art of weaving into a continuous, coherent, and animated narrative a multitude of minute and apparently unconnected particulars. This his peculiar power is exhibited, to some extent, in *The Book of Bon Accord* (1839), which, though the original plan of the work was never completed, remains the best history of the city of Aberdeen ever written; [2] it is still more strongly exhibited in his introduction to the *Statuta Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*; [3] and probably its best exemplification is the article on *Scottish Abbeys and Cathedrals*,[4] contributed by him at Lockhart's invitation to the *Quarterly Review* (June, 1849), a perfect model of what such a paper should be, and one of the most remarkable instances of much being compressed into little without every shred of romance and interest disappearing in the process.

[1] Some slight hint of the vast extent of his miscellaneous reading may be gathered from his anonymous *Deliciæ Literariæ* (1840), a delightful volume of table-talk.

[2] What Robertson did for Aberdeen was done in some sort for part of the county by John Burnett Pratt (1798–1869), incumbent of St. James's, Cruden, whose *Buchan* is unrivalled as a guide-book of the best type. The best edition is the 3rd (1870). The 4th (ed. Anderson, 1901) is all that a new edition of an old book ought not to be.

[3] Vol. i., Bannatyne Club, 1866.

[4] Reprinted with Memoir, Aberdeen, 1893.

His fellow-editor and member of the Spalding Club, George Grub (1812–92), was his inferior in literary skill, but not by much his inferior in learning; and his *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* (1861) is at once trustworthy in substance, temperate in language, and impartial in judgment. A good example, on the other hand, of the keen, though not dishonest, partisan is supplied by John Hosack (d. 1887), whose *Mary Queen of Scots and her Accusers* (1869)[1] formed until recently the brief from which her defenders spoke. From such heated controversy it is a relief to turn to the charming *Lives of the Lindsays* (1849), compiled by Alexander William, twenty-fifth Earl of Crawford and eighth Earl of Balcarres.

The middle portion of Queen Victoria's reign was not highly distinguished in the region of theology. Yet we note with interest the growth in the "residuary" Establishment of a "Broad-church school," in which some of the scattered remnants of moderatism were absorbed, but which in tone and outlook is essentially different from the Moderates of the eighteenth century. Its real parent, perhaps, was Dr. Arnold; it found kindred spirits South of the border in men like Kingsley; and, while it endeavoured to mitigate the severity of Calvinistic doctrine and to abolish the innovations introduced into the Kirk through the influence of the Independents two centuries before, it was for the most part earnest and serious in its attitude towards religion and life. Not much more learned, and certainly less nimble-witted, than Dean Stanley, who threw over it the cloak of his approbation, it never, perhaps, saw with any clearness of vision whither it was bound; but most of its members were excellent men, and, at all events, for them it was reserved to carry on as best they might the literary traditions of the Scottish Church. The most prominent of the band, with the exception of Norman Macleod (*infra*, p. 637) was John Tulloch[2] (1823–86), Principal of St.

[1] Second ed., 2 vols., 1870–4.

[2] *Memoir*, by Mrs. Oliphant, 1886.

Mary's College, St. Andrews. He first drew public attention to himself by winning the Burnett prize for an essay on *Theism* (1855), after which date his contributions to the magazines became numerous, and to more solid literature not infrequent. His *Leaders of the Reformation* (1859), *English Puritanism and its Leaders* (1861), and *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (1872)—which may be accounted his chief works—are all of the same type: sufficiently well, though not brilliantly, written, and based upon a tolerable foundation of learning. The latitudinarian movement we speak of in the Church of Scotland culminated in a volume of *Scotch Sermons* (1880), which created a good deal of stir in its day, and of which the present generation has in all likelihood never heard. Robert Herbert Story[1] (b. 1835), Principal of Glasgow College, alone remains to represent a mode of thought which, as an active force, has almost entirely disappeared.

The difficulties which now agitate the religious community are of a far more formidable character than the Calvinistic extravagances which vexed the Broad Churchmen of the sixties and seventies. A hint of the trouble in store had been afforded by the reception awarded to the article *Bible* published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1875. Its author was William Robertson Smith (1846–94), Professor of Hebrew in the Free Church seminary at Aberdeen. Rigid orthodoxy, combined with a firm adherence to the views of "our covenanting forefathers," had been the badge of this religious community since its origin; and, while acquitting the offender on a charge of heresy, their supreme Court removed him from his chair in 1881. In the same year he became the colleague, and in 1887 the successor, of Thomas Spencer

[1] Dr. Story has written, *inter alia*, *Robert Lee: a Memoir* (1868); *William Carstares* (1870); *Creed and Conduct* (1872); and *The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church* (1897).

Baynes (*infra*, p. 631) in the editorship of the *Britannica*; and he found a resting-place in the University of Cambridge, where he was enabled to pursue his Semitic and anthropological studies to good purpose. The results of his arduous labours are to be found in his *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1881), in *The Prophets of Israel* (1882), in *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885), and in *The Religion of the Semites* (1889).

Of mere sermons, many volumes continued to flow from the press. One of the most popular and eloquent preachers of his day was John Caird (1820–98), Principal in the University of Glasgow, whose famous discourse on *Religion in Common Life* was included in, and gave its title to, a highly successful collection of *Sermons* (1857). In later life his views, which at one time had been Evangelical, assumed a different complexion, and in his Croall Lecture, which bears to be an *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880), as well as in his Gifford Lecture on *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* (1900) we recognise a spirited attempt to express the truths of the Christian system of religion in the dialect of the "neo-Hegelian" philosophy. Among much published preaching of a less ambitious order, it must suffice to mention the *Pastoral Counsels* of John Robertson (1824-65), minister of Glasgow Cathedral; and the *Sermons* of a United Presbyterian divine, John Ker (1819–86), which are peculiarly felicitous in their use of scriptural phraseology: so easily abused, as the example of the seventeenth-century pulpiteers warns us. If, furthermore, we name Edward Bannerman Ramsay (1793–1872), Dean of Edinburgh, it is less for the sake of his devotional and hortatory works than for that of his famous *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character* (1857),[1] which, racy and pointed in themselves, have been the parent of much intolerable dulness, both in conversation and in print.

The list of scholars, men of science, and other learned men who flourished during these years, is a tolerably long one, and

[1] New ed. with Memoir by Cosmo Innes, 1874.

it is impossible to do more than name a few of the most illustrious. A fair proportion of the number was connected with the Universities.[1] It is true that the administration of patronage in those institutions was not as yet altogether satisfactory. While a man like William Veitch (1794–1885), whose *Greek Verbs, Irregular and Defective* (1848) justly earned for him the reputation of being the most eminent Grecian in Scotland—while Veitch languished in obscurity, the chairs of Humanity and Greek in the Scottish Universities were too often filled by charlatans or ignoramuses, whose preferment was wholly due to sectarian or political considerations. There were, however, brilliant instances to the contrary. William Ramsay (1806–65), who held the Chair of Humanity in Glasgow from 1831 to 1863, did not leave much printed work behind him, save an edition of the *Pro Cluentio* (1858) and a *Manual of Roman Antiquities* (1851), but his influence as a teacher was, *omnium consensu*, highly beneficial. Even more distinguished was William Young Sellar (1825–90), who was appointed to the corresponding chair in Edinburgh in 1863, and of whose work as a critic of Latin literature it would be difficult to speak too enthusiastically. His *Roman Poets of the Republic* (1863), his *Roman Poets of the Augustan Age* (1877), and his posthumous *Horace and the Elegiac Poets* (1892)[2] display that happy combination of ripe scholarship with exquisite taste and a thorough appreciation of literature which was once the peculiar glory of Oxford, and which the growth of minute specialism scarcely tends to encourage. Much the same qualities were possessed by Sir Alexander Grant (1826–84), Principal in the University of Edinburgh from 1868, though perhaps he was scarcely so fortunate in his opportuni-

[1] Colonel William Mure, of Caldwell (1799–1860), whose *Critical Account of the Language and Literature of Ancient Greece* (1850–57) is still one of the standard works on the subject, had no professional academic connection.

[2] This work contains an admirable memoir of Mr. Sellar from the pen of his nephew, Mr. A. Lang.

ties for displaying them. His monographs on *Xenophon* and *Aristotle* are on too small a scale to give free scope to his powers. Nor is his *Story of the University of Edinburgh* (1884) wholly satisfactory. It appears to bear traces of haste, and perhaps a subject of the sort was not specially congenial to the author; but the short biographical notices of former Principals and Professors are excellently well done.

In philosophy, the most distinguished name is that of James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64), who from the chair of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews impregnated the speculations of his countrymen, for the first time, with a decidedly Teutonic element. His mind was singularly acute, and his powers of exposition and argument get something less than justice done to them in the not very attractive *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1854), and the fragmentary *Lectures on Greek Philosophy* (1866). The seal of universal recognition was at once stamped upon the speculative genius of Alexander Campbell Fraser (b. 1819), who had succeeded Hamilton in the professorship of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh in 1854, when, seventeen years later, he published his monumental edition of the *Collected Works of Bishop Berkeley.*[1] Professor Fraser gave up his chair, but not his philosophical labours, in 1891; and an edition of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1894), and a Gifford Lecture on the *Philosophy of Theism* (1896) testify to the continuing and unabated vigour of an intellect at once subtle and profound. The volumes on Berkeley and Locke contributed to the "Philosophical Classics" series show that he can adapt himself to the requirements of a much less ample scale of work with uncommon dexterity and success. While Mr. Fraser was expounding metaphysics in Edinburgh, in Aberdeen Alexander Bain (b. 1818) was demonstrating from the chair of Logic, which he occupied from 1860 to 1881, that metaphysics were folly. This he did in a style cold as the climate and hard as the granite of his University town; and it would

[1] 3 vols., Oxford, with a fourth vol. containing the *Life and Letters.*

be difficult to find a more characteristic statement of the materialistic and utilitarian philosophy from which Mr. John Mill was always making furtive efforts to escape, than in Mr. Bain's *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (1859). To discuss the validity of his position is no business of ours; but it may not be illegitimate to note that his analysis of the human mind appears to be characterised by all the elaborate yet futile precision in which the early utilitarians took so much delight. Meanwhile, rival schools of philosophy were not being neglected. In Glasgow, whither he was transferred from St. Andrews in 1864, John Veitch [1] (1829–94) gallantly played the part of the last of the Hamiltonians. He wrote a *Memoir* of his master (1869), and assisted Mansel in editing his *Lectures*. Veitch's tastes, however, possibly inclined more to Rhetoric than to Logic, and inasmuch as his chair was professedly concerned with both, he had a good excuse for producing such works as his *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border* (1877), or his *Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry* (1887). That he was a fervent admirer both of nature and of poetry it would be wrong to doubt; but his tastes were circumscribed in many directions, and his criticism, which strongly resembles Principal Shairp's in type, is neither illuminating nor suggestive. The intuitive theory of morals found a devoted, but not very adroit, champion in Henry Calderwood (1830–98), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh from 1868.[2] From James M'Cosh (1811–94), a native of Ayrshire, who became Principal of Princeton University, U.S.A., came the dying echoes of Thomas Reid's philosophical system[3]; while yet another mode of thought was represented by James Hutchison Stirling (b. 1820), whose most famous work is on the subject of *The Secret of Hegel* (1865), which, according to the profane, he completely

[1] *Life*, by M. Bryce, 1896.

[2] See his *Philosophy of the Infinite* (1854), and *Moral Philosophy* (1872).

[3] See his *Examination of Mr. J. S. Mill's Philosophy* (1866) and *The Scottish Philosophy* (1875).

succeeded in keeping. Thomas Spencer Baynes (1823–87), who became Professor of Logic at St. Andrews in 1884, was much more than the alert and ingenious logician which his *Port Royal Logic* and *New Analytic* proclaimed him. A man of high intelligence, wide sympathy, and extensive learning, he more than justified his selection for the post of editor of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.[1]

In the region of natural science it is hard to believe that the names of James Clerk Maxwell (1831–79), Peter Guthrie Tait (1831–1901), and William Thomson, Lord Kelvin (b. 1824) will ever be forgotten. In geology, Sir Charles Lyell (1797–1875) will be remembered by his *Principles of Geology* (1830–32) and his *Antiquity of Man* (1863), and Principal Forbes (1809–68) by his *Travels through the Alps and Savoy* (1843) and his *Occasional Papers on the theory of Glaciers* (1859). A notable pioneer of the new science of anthropology was John Ferguson M'Lennan (1827–81), a member of the Scottish bar, whose *Primitive Marriage* (1865) tended largely to modify the "Patriarchal theory" of sub-primæval society then in the ascendant. His views may be sound enough; but he almost wholly lacked the dignity and force of style with which Sir Henry Maine had been able to present his masterly conception of *Ancient Law*. A contributor to anthropology of even higher standing —because primarily a collector of invaluable evidence which, but for his efforts, might soon have perished—was John Francis Campbell of Islay (1822–85), to whom we owe the *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (1860–62). It may be doubted if more seasonable and precious assistance was rendered to the study of folklore by any book in any language during the generation of which we speak. Certainly the lucubrations of the McCallum More himself—numerous and weighty as they are—must bow before the clansman's compilation. George John Douglas Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll

[1] See the *Table Talk of Shirley*, 1895, p. 40.

(1823–1900), began his career as an author at the early age of nineteen with a pamphlet on the impending Disruption; and the flow of tracts, great or small, from his pen terminated only with his life. He was unquestionably one of the greatest parliamentary and platform orators of his day; but, however cogent his speeches may have been, there may be detected in his writings a strain of the harsh and unsympathetic which has effectually prevented them from assuming the place which might otherwise have been theirs. His attitude was always that of the lecturer, and he appeared to himself to live in a region remote from the intellectual and emotional fallacies of the common mass of men. He took part in most of the controversies which vexed his age, and was in full sympathy with the Broad Church movement in Scotland; but it may be questioned if he won many converts by his *Reign of Law* (1866), the most important work of his prime, or by his *Unseen Foundations of Society* (1893), a production in which there is much worth pondering. He was the very incarnation of the amateur *savant*; a race, which, with all its foibles, we can ill afford to spare in the British Isles.

Two great travellers, continuing the tradition of "Abyssinian" Bruce [1] (1730–94) and Mungo Park [2] (1771–1806), added appreciably to our knowledge of an imperfectly explored continent. The great work accomplished by David Livingstone (1817–74) is plainly and straightforwardly recorded in his *Researches in South Africa* (1857), the *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi* (1865) and his *Last Journals* (1875). In *A Walk across Africa* (1864), James Augustus Grant (1827–92) recounted the story of his memorable expedition with the ill-fated Speke to discover the sources of the Nile. Compared with such books, *The Abode of Snow* (1875)

[1] *Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile*, 5 vols., 4to, 1790.

[2] *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, 1799; *Journal of a Mission into the Interior of Africa*, 1815.

of Andrew Wilson (1830–81) is comparatively unimportant; but Wilson had an unmistakable literary gift, as appears not only from his *Ever-Victorious Army* (1868), but also from a very remarkable paper on *Infanti Perduti* which redeems the collection of *Edinburgh Essays* published in 1857 from mediocrity or worse.

Wilson was an industrious contributor to the magazines and newspapers, and during the period of which we now treat, the number of Scotsmen engaged in some form or other of journalism was very large. To enumerate even those who found regular employment on the London press is impossible; Thomas Ballantyne of the *Statesman*, John Robertson and John Black of the *Morning Chronicle*, Angus Bethune Reach, William Maccall of the *Critic*, John George Edgar, and Eneas Sweetman Dallas of the *Times*, are but a few of the men who earned their living in the Southern capital as "slaves of the lamp." One great journalist remained at home—a worthy compeer of Delane. Alexander Russel (1814–76) was trained in Johnstone's printing office in Edinburgh, before he became editor of the *Berwick Advertiser* in 1839. He assumed the control of the *Fife Herald* in 1842, and three years later joined the staff of the *Scotsman*, then published twice a week. In 1849 he succeeded Mr. M'Laren in the editorship of that journal (which became a daily in 1855), and thenceforward his name was inseparably associated with the Whig organ of the Scottish metropolis. He contributed occasionally to the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*, chiefly on his favourite amusement, fishing;[1] but otherwise his whole time and his whole energies were devoted to the paper, with the result that, like almost all great editors, he lives entirely in tradition. His writing in the *Scotsman* was frequent and copious enough—scarcely a number, indeed, appeared without something from his pen; but he inspired all his contributors with his own spirit, and thus it is

[1] See *The Salmon*, 1864, in which these papers are collected.

impossible to discriminate between articles that are his and articles that are merely framed on his model. He had an inexhaustible fund of native shrewdness, and an overflowing supply of humour which might aptly be described as Rabelaisian, in the best sense of the epithet, and upon which he could draw at a single moment's notice; so that for more than a quarter of a century he appealed to the average Scot, who was neither a Tory nor a Radical, and, most assuredly, not a Puritan, as no one else even attempted to do. His politics were those of the orthodox Whig school, and the dissidence of mere religious dissent was as distasteful to him as the visions of the mediævalist or the reactionary. He bequeathed to the journal which he conducted a controversial tradition more vigorous than urbane, and one in which the bludgeon is a good deal more prominent than the rapier. If the difference in tone between the *Scotsman* and the *Times* were a true measure of the comparative civilisation of Scotland and England, the patriotic Caledonian would have little to congratulate himself upon. Fortunately in recent years the attempt has been abandoned to imitate the inimitable, and the "facetious" stop has been suffered to remain at rest.[1]

For a short space of time, Russel had a rival in Edinburgh not unworthy to enter the lists against him. From 1860 to

[1] Like the greater part of good journalism, Russel's articles were of purely ephemeral interest, though portions of them linger in the memory of those who were privileged to read them as they came fresh from his hand. I need only here, *exempli gratiâ*, refer to one (written, I am told, in the railway train between Edinburgh and Loch Leven) *àpropos* of one of the periodical "water famines" to which the Modern Athens is subject. A certain Bailie or Councillor MacLachlan, a fishmonger to trade, had been insisting upon the necessity of rigid economy on the part of the citizens in the use of water, and had clenched his argument by the statement that he had not taken a bath for more than a year. Russel referred to the Bailie as "the foul but philanthropic MacLachlan," and expressed the hope that his wares "had not been so long out of the water" as himself. It was announced in the *Westminster Gazette* of January 19, 1903 (I know not on what authority), that a selection from Mr. Russel's leading articles was being prepared by one of his oldest friends.

1864, the *Edinburgh Courant* was edited by James Hannay[1] (1827–73), the descendant of an old Scots family, who, after serving as a midshipman in the Royal Navy, had drifted into literature and journalism. His novels, *Singleton Fontenoy* (1850) and *Eustace Conyers* (1855), possess unusual vivacity, and contain one or two of his happiest jests. To them we owe the admirable conundrum, "Why is Lieutenant So-and-So like England? Because he expects every man to do *his* duty;" and the no less pointed retort of A who, after expounding the doctrine of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number," is asked by B, "What *is* the greatest number?" and coolly replies, "Number one." Hannay's editorship of the *Courant* was brilliant but unsuccessful. While remaining excellent friends with Russel, in spite of political differences, he needlessly offended, and quarrelled with, most of the local magnates of his own party, upon whom he subsequently did his best to revenge himself in magazine-articles.[2] A selection of his *Courant* "leaders" and reviews, published under the title of *Characters and Criticisms* (1865), gives a taste of his journalistic quality, but his best work in criticism will be found in his *Essays from the Quarterly Review* (1861). That he was a great thinker no one would maintain; but he had a larger share of accurate scholarship than most men in Scotland, a lively and correct style, and a strong turn for satire; and, in fine, supplied a most wholesome antidote and corrective to the perfervid Scotticism of persons like Mr. Blackie. He was a good hater, and had the secret of goading those whom he disliked into a frenzy of rage, or an

[1] See Espinasse, *Literary Recollections and Sketches*, 1893, pp. 331 *et seq.*, where the fullest and best account of Hannay is to be found. See also *Temple Bar*, vol. xxxviii. p. 89 (1873), and vol. xlix. p. 234 (1877).

[2] See *The Scot at Home*, in the *Cornhill Magazine*, vol. xiv. p. 238 (1866); and *Recollections of a Provincial Editor* in *Temple Bar*, vol. xxiii. p. 175 (1868). Some of the personalities in these articles are inexcusable, almost as brutal as Hannay's famous repartee to the *soi-disant* lineal descendant of Joseph Addison; but apart from these, the first-mentioned is well worth reading.

agony of depression. Sir John Skelton never forgave his review of *Thalatta;* Principal Tulloch could never forget certain aspersions cast by Hannay on his parts of speech.[1] His "blood and culture" theory is capable of being overdriven, and he assuredly overdrove it; but, though his arguments may not always be sound, his wit was pungent, and the felicity of the illustrations by means of which he seeks to support them is undeniable.[2]

The Scottish provincial press was not without its celebrities in these days. Thomas Aird, the poet, edited the *Dumfriesshire and Galloway Herald* from 1835 to 1863, and in the North, besides William Alexander at Aberdeen, there was Robert Carruthers (1799–1878), the editor for half a century of the *Inverness Courier*, of which he became proprietor in 1831. His *Life of Pope* (1856) has not yet lost its value, and he rendered important assistance to his friend Robert Chambers in the preparation of the second edition of the *Cyclopædia of English Literature* (1857). Nor was the history of the Scottish newspaper press without its amazing episodes, such as the bringing of Henry Kingsley to Edinburgh for the purpose of editing the now extinct *Daily Review*, the organ of the Presbyterian Dissenting interest. On such matters we have no space to dwell.

But in journalism which was either Scottish or connected with Scotland, there were two significant phenomena. One of these was the establishment in 1860 of *Good Words*, the first sixpenny monthly magazine of a popular type.[3] It greatly

[1] See Mrs. Oliphant, *Memoir* of Principal Tulloch, 3rd ed., 1899, p. 167.

[2] Thus, he says that Horace Walpole's ethical reflections remind him of the talk of a "French *soubrette* who had studied Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*." Again, referring to those ardent Caledonian patriots who object to "England" being used for "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," he remarks: "On the same principle, we suppose, to talk of the 'Longmans' is a gross injustice to Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, or whoever may be the present partners of that respectable firm." (*The Scot at Home, ut sup.*, p. 256).

[3] *Chambers's Journal* was then primarily a weekly, and cost 7d. a month.

fluttered the dovecots of the strict Evangelicals, and, so far as Scotland, at all events, was concerned, dealt the first great blow at the dividing wall between secular and religious reading. Published in London by Alexander Strahan, a Scotsman, whose moderate success in business is one of the mysteries of "the trade," it obtained a large circulation, and no one who remembers the excellent matter which it provided for the Sundays of childhood, can help looking back to it with feelings of gratitude. It was edited by Norman Macleod[1] (1812–72), minister of the Barony parish in Glasgow: a man of great eloquence and infectious enthusiasm, who contributed only less than two or three other men to the rehabilitation of the Church of Scotland after 1843. Macleod himself ventured into fiction, not without success, as *The Old Lieutenant* (1862), *Wee Davie* (1864), and *The Starling* (1867), remain to show. Probably his best book is the *Reminiscences of a Highland Parish* (1867), but the early volumes of *Good Words* (despite the sneers of Hannay, who disrespectfully called it the *Goody Two Shoes Magazine*), are perhaps his most characteristic monument from a literary point of view. In the conduct of the magazine he exercised a judgment and discrimination not always supposed to be characteristic of the fiery Celt he was; and he drew contributions of a suitable nature from all the writers then most in repute. Among these there falls but one to be mentioned here. Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd (1825–1901), minister of the first charge of St. Andrews, and best known under the disguise of his numerous initials, had won his spurs in *Fraser's Magazine* by a series of essays, subsequently collected under the title of *Recreations of a Country Parson*, which to some people seemed a mere mass of affectation, but which won the applause of scores of others. Though few parish ministers laboured more diligently than he both in and out of the pulpit (and be it said that as a preacher

[1] See *Memoir*, by his brother Donald, 2 vols., 1876, an admirably executed piece of work.

he was better than most of those who affected to laugh at him), he wrote many volumes of essays, which have probably no permanent value, but which, behind their persistent mannerism, often conceal shrewd observation of life, and not seldom a tolerably sharp sting. His *Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews* (1892), which was followed up by *Last Years of St. Andrews* (1896), shows him in his most characteristic mood, and has the great merit of being interesting, if taken in moderate doses.

The other phenomenon in Scottish journalism to which reference has been made, was the *North British Review*, a quarterly established in 1844, and discontinued twenty-seven years later, after an honourable and distinguished career. Its policy was decidedly liberal, *plus* an infusion of religious, though not sectarian, feeling, which was thought to be wanting in the *Edinburgh*. It was, therefore, not unnatural that at the outset it should have been conducted by men closely identified with the Disruption ; and, in point of fact, its first editors were Dr. Welsh, Mr. Edward Maitland, afterwards Lord Barcaple (1845–47), and Dr. Hanna, the son-in-law of Dr. Chalmers (1847–50). For the next seven years it was under the control of Professor A. Campbell Fraser, who was succeeded first by Dr. Duns, and then by Dr. Blaikie ; and from 1863 to 1869—not the least illustrious period in its history—it was edited by Mr. David Douglas, its publisher and one of its proprietors.[1] On the discontinuance of the short-lived *Home and Foreign Review*, Mr. T. F. Wetherell accepted the editorship of the *North British*, and brought most of his staff with him, but in spite of the co-operation of men like the late Lord Acton, this experiment proved a failure ; the tone of the *Review* became more Roman than Catholic ; and the number which appeared in February, 1871, was the last.

The *North British* by no means depended upon Edinburgh men for its matter. Its principal contributor on foreign

[1] It is to the kindness of Mr. Douglas and Professor Fraser that I am indebted for these particulars as to the *North British Review*.

politics at one time was Sir M. E. Grant-Duff; William Rathbone Greg wrote constantly upon domestic affairs; and Sir David Brewster, under Mr. Campbell Fraser's *régime*, scarcely missed a single number. Mr. T. H. Green contributed *inter alia* a memorable paper on the philosophy of Aristotle;[1] and persons so different in opinion and spirit from the founders of the periodical as James Hannay were also enrolled in the list of its supporters. Much of the best stuff that appeared in the *Review* came from men who were, or were about to be, ornaments of the Scottish universities; from scholars or critics, like Sellar and Shairp on the one hand, and from men of science like Tait and Fleeming Jenkin on the other. Some of the *North British* reviewers have already been remarked upon in another connection, but the present seems an appropriate place for noticing one or two others.

It was the aim of at least one of the conductors of the *Review* to avoid, as far as possible, the "Parliament House" point of view in the discussion alike of political and literary questions. But it may be doubted if a more serviceable pen was at their command than that of Henry Hill Lancaster[2] (1829–75), whose untimely death cut short a forensic career of unusual promise. His posthumous volume of collected essays contains much that is interesting, or even brilliant, though the style may sometimes be too much that of the "full-dress" quarterly article; and, in particular, he who has doubts as to the permanence of George Eliot's position in fiction will find in it a powerful statement of the grounds of his scepticism, with such insistence upon the enormity of Maggie Tulliver's elopement with Stephen Guest as the rhetoric of Mr. Swinburne could scarce improve upon in his *Note on Charlotte Brontë*. A far more widely-spread reputation than ever fell to Mr. Lancaster's lot was enjoyed by a member of the medical

[1] Reprinted in his *Works*, vol. iii.

[2] *Essays and Reviews*. With a Memoir by B. Jowett, Edin., 1876.

profession, Dr. John Brown [1] (1810–82), about whose writing there lingers the charm that emanates from a noble character and amiable disposition. How many friends has he won for himself by his admirably touched sketch of little Marjorie Fleming! We may think the conventional comparison of him with Charles Lamb a thing inept; and we may sigh for the robust temperament of a former generation which could tolerate and enjoy the excruciating pathos of *Rab and his Friends*, as of little Nell, or of Paul Dombey; but we cannot ignore the great literary gift of one who could write of his own father so intimately yet so essentially without exaggeration or offence. Of all Dr. John Brown's writings this biographical essay [2] most clearly demonstrates the rich moral and intellectual endowment of its author.

George Gilfillan [3] (1813–78), like Dr. Brown, came of a Seceder stock, but there the resemblance ended. His biographers, indeed, say that he "helped to create modern religious thought throughout the English-speaking world," and it is certain that he occupied the pulpit of a Secession meeting-house in Dundee. Yet there clung to him a species of mental vulgarity which robs almost all of the immense amount he wrote of any positive value. He was a great contributor to the *Critic*, to the *Eclectic Review*, and to the *Dundee Advertiser*; and a collection of his various books would occupy more space than most private libraries can afford. His most characteristic work is probably contained in the three series of his *Gallery of Literary Portraits* (1845, 1849, 1854); but he rendered more valuable service to his generation by an edition of the English poets (1853–60), in the days before such reprints were common, than by anything else. His tone was thoroughly provincial, his style radically vicious; and,

[1] *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2 vols., 1858–61; *John Leech and other Papers*, 1882. See Peddie, *Recollections*, 1893.

[2] It will be found in Cairns's *Memoir of John Brown, D.D.*, 1860.

[3] *George Gilfillan*, by R. A. and E. S. Watson, 1892.

consequently, as well as by reason of his admiration for the "spasmodic" poets, he became a butt of Aytoun and of *Maga*. Yet there are gleams of good sense, and traces of clear perception in his writings which not even the eloquence of the pulpit and the lecture-platform, in which he so freely indulges, can wholly extinguish or obliterate. With greater advantages, or a larger stipend, he might have been a tolerable critic.

John Skelton (1831–97) was a man of infinitely finer sensibility, of infinitely purer taste, and of infinitely greater refinement; yet his literary criticism is almost as unsatisfactory although in quite a different way, as Gilfillan's. It was in *Fraser's Magazine* that "Shirley" became known, in the late fifties or the early sixties, to the general public, and there he enjoyed the distinction of being among the first to hail the dawn of the literary genius of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It was a rare beginning for a young critic; but his unquestionable insight—his scent for the really good in poetry or prose—was counteracted by a diffuseness of manner which grew worse as time went on. If the attempt were made to define Sir John Skelton's style by a negative, it might be said to be the precise negation of what we call trenchant. Thus *Thalatta!* (1862), his most ambitious novel, is difficult reading, though it has good passages, and is not so hopelessly bad as James Hannay would have had the world of Edinburgh to believe.[1] Even *The Crookit Meg* (1880),[2] too, which is much shorter, wants the concentration, the directness, the unity of purpose, essential to a successful story. And so it comes about that Sir John is seen at his best when it is part of "the game" to be discursive: as in the more or less auto-biographical sketches known as *The Table-Talk of Shirley*.[3] Once or twice he tried his hand at fun of the rollicking type, but neither *Our New Candidate* (1880) nor *The Sergeant in the Hielan's* (1881) has any of the

[1] See *Characters and Criticisms*, p. 193.
[2] See *Table Talk of Shirley*, second series, 2 vols., 1896.
[3] First series, 1895.

vitality of *Glenmutchkin* or the *Noctes:* for which Skelton had a warm admiration. In history he occupied himself much with the eternal problem of Mary Stuart, and he composed an ingenious defence of the Queen in the form of a speech to an imaginary jury.[1] But his best piece of really heavy work is his *Maitland of Lethington* (1887 and 1888), the closing passage of which, summing up the career of that singular personage, is a really fine bit of writing. Sir John Skelton's mind was not readily receptive of new ideas. After a literary *jeunesse orageuse*, spent in shocking the Whigs by the paradoxes of a red-hot Tory, he settled down into a routine of thought from which it was not easy to dislodge him. He distrusted innovations, or apparent innovations, both in substance and in form; and so he emphatically belongs as a man of letters to the era with which this chapter is occupied rather than to that into which he long survived. What Skelton lacked of concentration and brilliance was present in Patrick Proctor Alexander[2] (1824–86), though he perversely chose not to make the most of it. As it is, the harvest of that wasted life is very remarkable. Of his verse, whether serious or humorous, little need be said, though it is not by any means to be despised. But his memoir of Alexander Smith, prefixed to *Last Leaves* (1868), is as good a performance of its kind as a man need wish to see; his *Examination* of Mr. John Mill's doctrine of moral freedom is as vigorous and deadly assault as was ever delivered upon the popular philosopher of the day; while his *Occasional Discourse on Sauerteig, by Smelfungus*,[3] is not only the best burlesque of Carlyle's eccentricities of manner that ever was written—nay, one of the few really good prose parodies of

[1] This will be found in his *Essays in History and Biography* (1883). It appeared originally in 1876. He also wrote the *Mary Stuart* for Messrs. Goupil's well-known illustrated series (1893).

[2] See Skelton's *Table Talk*, 1st ser., *ut sup.*; and Knight, *Some Nineteenth Century Scotsmen*, 1902.

[3] The *Examination* and the *Sauerteig* are printed together in a volume entitled *Mill and Carlyle* (Edin., 1866).

any author that exist—but also a most incisive criticism of the sage's favourite doctrines as developed in his *Frederick*.

Finally, mention shall here be made of David Masson (b. 1822), though, possessing the secret of perpetual youth as he does, he might equally well have been reserved for the concluding chapter. The introduction to the last of the eleven volumes of the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* edited by him (1880–99) [1] discovers little or no abatement of that force of character and grasp of mind which so well consort with the office of Historiographer Royal for Scotland. Mr. Masson, an Aberdonian by origin, went to London to engage in literature and journalism so long ago as 1847, and a volume of *Essays Biographical and Critical* (1856) contains a selection of what is best in his earliest work, including a long article on Chatterton, which was expanded into a volume in 1899. A series of lectures delivered at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on the *British Novelists and their Style* appeared in 1859; and the high reputation he had won for himself in the world of letters is attested by his appointment in the same year to be the editor of a new venture—*Macmillan's Magazine*. In some respects Mr. Masson may not have been an ideal editor; but it is certain that nothing trashy or meretricious invaded the columns of the periodical during his nine years of office. In 1865 he became Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Edinburgh, and he held that appointment for thirty years, during which he rendered invaluable service to the country by his consistent advocacy and exaltation of the "useless" in education as the thing which alone is worth knowing, and which all Universities worthy of the name exist to teach—as well as by inspiring the successive generations of his students with a genuine ardour for what is highest and best in literature. His *magnum opus*, a *Life of John Milton*, in connection with the history of his time, had been begun in 1859 and was not

[1] See *Register*, second series, vol. i.

completed until 1880, which saw the appearance of the sixth and last volume. Few works published during the last fifty years have so plainly borne the stamp of unflinching industry. It is a monument, or a dungeon, of learning; but it would be affectation to pretend that it is a masterpiece of literature, whatever it may be as a repository of materials. *Non omnia possumus omnes*, and it is hard to deny that Mr. Masson's style has always been his weak point. It is not merely rugged, it is deliberately and affectedly rugged; the touch is seldom light; there is a studied absence of anything approaching to grace or delicacy; and throughout we are painfully conscious of the baleful influence of his friend, Mr. Carlyle. Nowhere are these defects more obtrusive than in the otherwise excellent monograph on *Drummond of Hawthornden* (1873), unless it be in the introduction to the Globe edition of Goldsmith, an author whose conspicuous elegance renders him singularly ill-fitted for heavy-handed treatment. On the other hand, Mr. Masson seems peculiarly in his element in handling Carlyle; and his warmest admirers would find it difficult to select any piece or passage from his writings which so happily exemplifies his good qualities as the paper on *Carlyle's Edinburgh Days*, reprinted in *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories* (1892).[1] There the sense of effort produced by all his works disappears, either because the effort had been less, as expended on a favourite theme, or because a sense of effort seems in keeping with the asperities of his subject; there is no more than a faint suggestion of "groanings that cannot be uttered"; and the effect of the essay as a whole is one of coherence and harmony. Let us all hope that this Nestor of Scottish literature may long be spared to inculcate upon a new generation, both by precept and example, the lessons of courage in opinion and thoroughness in work which he has taught so manfully for more than half a century.

[1] The lectures on *Carlyle and his Friends* (1885) are scarcely so good.

CHAPTER XII

THE CLOSE OF THE VICTORIAN ERA: 1880–1901

The concluding portion of the Victorian era, as regards the literature of Scotland, differs from the early and middle periods, in respect that it can boast of one name in comparison with which the names of all other authors may be said to be almost insignificant. The years whose harvest formed the subject of our consideration in the preceding chapter, saw much good work done, as we have noted; but no one in their course stood forth so conspicuously as Mr. Stevenson in the succeeding generation. It has been his misfortune to become a sort of literary fetish alike to those who, having some sort of education, desire to be deemed superior beings, and to that section of the vast mass of semi-illiterates which would fain be thought to possess some tincture of knowledge and refinement. Hence, much of the eulogy which has been lavished upon him is disfigured by the brand of affectation and unreality. Cockney critics, with whom in his good nature he was pleased at times to associate, have gushed over his memory *ad nauseam;* while the natural instinct of the Scot to cherish as a valuable item of the national assets any product of his country which other people have approved, has procured him a band of lip-worshippers to whom his peculiar genius, if comprehensible, must be

merely abhorrent. The day is probably not far distant when, on every 13th of November, festive gatherings will be held and "eloquent" speeches delivered in honour, not of the penetrating and fearless critic of Knox and Burns, not of the brilliant essayist of *Virginibus Puerisque*, not of the hero of *Prince Otto*, but of the moralist of *Jekyll and Hyde*, the pulpiteer of the South Sea Islands.

Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson [1] (better known as Robert Louis Stevenson) was born in 1850, and was the son of Thomas Stevenson, a distinguished civil engineer, and a man of the highest character, though not wholly free from the defects attendant upon an austere type of virtue. It is impossible not to suspect that the less amiable aspects of his idiosyncrasy are correctly indicated in the sketch of the hero's father in *The Misadventures of John Nicholson*,[2] a work which in this connection appears to have escaped the notice of Louis's official biographer.

Of Mr. Stevenson's childhood the accounts we possess are tolerably full. His memory was good, and reticence was not one of his characteristics, at least in later years, when success had knocked at the door. As a child he appears to have been precocious; but his experiences were not widely different from those of any of his contemporaries who belonged to the same class of society. They all had Calvinistic nurses; they all learned "The Lord's my Shepherd"; and they were all familiar with choice extracts from M'Cheyne. When nursery days were over, the state of his health prevented his benefiting by

[1] *Works*, Edinburgh ed., 28 vols. 1894–98. All the more important works may be procured separately at moderate prices. The "official" biography is the *Life* by Graham Balfour (2 vols. 1901), executed, if not with brilliancy, at least with discretion. It may be supplemented by Mr. Colvin's article in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.* Most of what has been written about Mr. Stevenson is "sad stuff"; but reference may be made to Mr. Raleigh's (1895) and Mr. Cornford's (1899) monographs, and to an article by M. Marcel Schwob in the *New Review*, February, 1895.

[2] Cassell's *Christmas Annual*, 1887; rep. for the first time in the Edin. ed., vol. xxii. p. 82.

the discipline of a long course at a good public school—the sovereign specific for an only child. His stay at the Edinburgh Academy, then in its zenith under Dr. Hodson, was brief; and the private seminaries which he afterwards attended were of no great eminence. Thus he became a youth who to many of his contemporaries (always the sternest, though perhaps not the least competent, judges) seemed upon occasion little less than insufferable. Vain and self-conscious, he had imbibed the pestilent doctrine that conformity to current ideas in the matter of dress, manners, and behaviour is the mark of imbecility and want of spirit. He sank to that worst form of conventionality which consists in being "unconventional"; for he was ever the "burgess" playing the Bohemian, and not the true gipsy. He thought by eccentricity of garb and by an apparent neglect of the minutiæ of the toilet, to approve himself both great and good; and, though there was a lucid interval in this course of conduct, he returned, towards the close of his third decade, to a policy which, however pardonable in adolescence, can have no justification in later life. Some portion of the blame must attach to his father, who, himself a man of means, considered his grown-up son sufficiently provided for on an allowance of five shillings a week. What Mr. Stevenson thought of this plan may be gathered from a significant passage in *John Nicholson*.[1] Yet this error of judgment on the part of the parent need not have dissuaded the son from seeking the countenance and society of those men of established ability and reputation of whom Edinburgh could even then boast, and who were far from indisposed to welcome rising talent, more especially in the person of a young advocate.[2]

Mr. Stevenson passed at the Scottish Bar in 1875; but neither his physical nor his mental constitution fitted him for steady application to his profession. It is unnecessary here to trace his many wanderings in search of health. It is enough

[1] Edin. ed., vol. xxii. p. 86.

[2] See *Blackwood's Magazine*, Nov., 1901, vol. clxx. p. 619.

to record that, after contracting a marriage in California in 1880, and attempting the experiment of residing in the south of England from 1884 to 1887, he was compelled to face the impossibility of continuing to reside in this country, and finally made his home in Samoa in 1889. There he resided till his death in 1894, busy with literary work, and engrossed in his spare time with the politics of the island, and the domestic affairs of his own household and homestead. Those who profess to take an overwhelming interest in the South Sea Islands will find ample information about them and their inhabitants in some of his later works and in his posthumous letters.[1]

From early youth Mr. Stevenson "played the sedulous ape" (in his own famous phrase) to authors of all kinds and of all ages. By thirteen, he had applied the method of the *Book of Snobs* to a study of the inhabitants of Peebles; and the date of his first published performance—a tract on *The Pentland Rising*—is 1866. He reckons the Covenanting authors among his literary preceptors, but the influence of Sir Thomas Browne is much more perceptible in his writing than that of Wodrow. At his best, it is impossible to pluck out the heart of his mystery by means of any theory of imitation. His deliberately and professedly imitative performances are no more than ingenious and painstaking. Tod Lapraik's story in *Catriona* is a creditable enough exercise on a model of incomparable excellence. The poems in the Scots vernacular[2] are perhaps less happy. They never lose sight of Robert Fergusson, with whom Mr. Stevenson appears at one time to have thought that he had some special intellectual and even moral affinity; and every turn of phrase is diligently laboured after his fashion. But the general effect is unsatisfactory. Although there are good lines here and there,[3] the verse never runs smoothly, or at

[1] *Vailima Letters*, ed. Colvin, 2 vols., 1895.

[2] Most of them will be found in *Underwoods* (1887).

[3] *E.g.*, the excellent stanza in the *Lowden Sabbath Morn* beginning :—

"Wi' sappy unction hoo he burkes
The hopes o' them that trust in works."

its ease; and the poet is composing in a foreign and unfamiliar tongue as plainly as though he were Burns writing rhymed heroics in English.

By the time, then, that he came into his kingdom, Mr. Stevenson had so completely absorbed the contributions of his predecessors that his style was something very different from a mere *pastiche* or mosaic. It possessed organic unity; it was informed with individuality; and it remained defiant of analysis into its original elements. Yet to the last he remained peculiarly sensitive to the infection of what he read. That he should have found the mannerisms of Carlyle catching is intelligible enough; but that he should have detected in the prose of Livy a subtle influence for evil argues a degree of susceptibility at which it is hard for a normally constituted person not to scoff. No man, it is certain, laboured more assiduously than Stevenson at the formation of a style of writing which should be dignified and worthy. He was the chief and leader of that movement for the resuscitation of good English which, like all such movements, was productive of many distressing consequences, but which was the inevitable and salutary reaction against such slip-slop as writers so well found in other respects as Anthony Trollope and Mrs. Oliphant were not ashamed to rest content with. It is rash to draw a hard-and-fast line between things so intimately connected as form and matter; but it seems not unjust to say that for Stevenson the effort came to be, not to find appropriate language for a superabundance of ideas, but, to find ideas to be clothed in the exquisitely appropriate language which he had ever at command. Of imagination he had no plethora; but his gift of vocabulary and diction was so rich and so patiently cultivated that he seemed to make one idea do the work of two. No writer in our time—not even Mr. Pater—has had an ear like his for the rhythms and cadences of English prose; and none has been so keenly alive to the virtue of a well-placed polysyllable. "The *tumultuary* and grey tide of life,"

"an endless company of *attenuated* clouds," "the momentous and *nugatory* gift of life"—these three phrases selected at random are illustrations of that keen sense of the values of words and names to which almost every page of his writing bears witness.

That this rare and admirable talent failed to secure for him the recognition of the public need scarcely be said. For about twelve years from the commencement of his serious authorship he wrote for a comparatively limited circle, and it was within that period, I venture to think, that most of his best work was done. To the *Portfolio*, to *Macmillan's Magazine*, and above all to the *Cornhill*, then under the direction of Mr. Leslie Stephen, he was contributing during the 'seventies and the early 'eighties stuff which found great acceptance later on when he had made his name. Also, in *Temple Bar* he was essaying his first flights in fiction; and the present writer can recollect the sensation of mingled delight and stupefaction with which in the summer of 1878 he perused the *New Arabian Nights* in the pages of *London*: a weekly Conservative review, founded by Robert Glasgow Brown,[1] and edited during part of its brief existence by Mr. W. E. Henley. But to workmanship of such consummate delicacy and perfection the great mass of readers naturally declined to pay any heed. *Treasure Island* (1883), it is true, did something to stir their apathy; for here, no question, was the best story of adventure that had been published in England since the appearance of *Lorna Doone*. But *Prince Otto* (1885) merely increased the bewilderment of the average person, and it was not until the following year that Mr. Stevenson performed the operation so aptly described by Mr. Frederick Greenwood as "cutting the string." In 1886 there appeared in paper covers *The Strange*

[1] Brown, with two other fellow-members of the Speculative Society, had been associated with Stevenson in the *Edinburgh University Magazine* (1871), commemorated in the volume known as *Memories* and *Portraits*.

Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a tolerable, but by no means an exceptional, specimen of its author's art, its theme being dual personality, which had always possessed for him a strong fascination, and which he had already handled to better purpose in the powerful short story of *Markheim* (1885). What used to be called "Shilling Shockers" were then in high fashion, and the public pounced upon *Jekyll and Hyde* with avidity. They not only found in it a sufficiently thrilling narrative, but they had little difficulty in scenting out a highly edifying allegory. The pulpit was then, as it probably still is, the most valuable advertising medium in the country ; and the ministers of religion of all denominations were not slow to seize upon the new book and the comparatively unknown writer, and enlist them as allies in the cause of morality. Thenceforward the vessel of Mr. Stevenson's fortunes sailed in comparatively smooth waters ; he was hailed no longer as a perplexing, but as an ethically sound—a "helpful"—writer ; and his previous works, read in the light of so improving a parable, were welcomed at once as adminicles of virtue and as masterpieces of literature.

The year of *Jekyll* witnessed the appearance of *Kidnapped*, which, like *Treasure Island* and *The Black Arrow*—a piece of mere "tushery,"[1] not published as a book until 1888—had originally made its bow in a periodical for the young adorned with rude wood-cuts and printed upon the greyest of paper in the bluntest of type. *Kidnapped* was the first of a series of works of fiction which came to a close with the fragmentary and anachronistic *Weir of Hermiston* (1896). The list includes the gloomy *Master of Ballantrae* (1889), *Catriona* (1893), a sequel to *Kidnapped*, and *St. Ives* (1897), which was completed by another hand. In quite a different vein are the tales

[1] An expressive word, derived from the expletive "Tush!" and employed by Mr. Stevenson and his friends to signify the stilted and unreal jargon in which the historical novel dealing with the Middle Ages is often written. "Tushery" in literature, with all its faults, was preferable to Jink" in life—the most depressing thing conceivable to read about.

written in collaboration with his step-son : *The Wrong Box* (1889), which is riotous farce streaked with horror ; *The Wrecker* (1892), perhaps the most disappointing of all his works (who does not shudder at the "Hebdomadary Picnics"?) ; and *The Ebb Tide* (1894), which, in the character of the loathsome Huish, contains at least one delineation of great merit. Few judges will probably be disposed to deny that of all these *Kidnapped* is the best. Less than any other does it convey the impression of the author's mind being perpetually on the rack of invention. Moreover the design of the book gives ample scope for the elaboration of episodes, and Mr. Stevenson was essentially a master of episodes rather than of construction. In the character of Alan Breck he had one of his happiest inspirations ; and with all deference to the numerous admirers of Miss Barbara Grant in *Catriona*, who is almost the only really good thing in the way of womankind that he produced, the story is none the worse for the total absence of female interest. In *Kidnapped*, to sum up, the characteristic weaknesses of the author are for the time being in abeyance, and he comes near to realising his own lofty ideal of romance. Yet even in *Kidnapped* there is something lacking. We are aware, as Mr. Raleigh puts it, of the "finished literary craftsman who has served his period of apprenticeship," but we suspect that he has contracted the habit of merely "playing with his tools," though the business calls for serious work ; and the suspicion was never banished by any subsequent performance. To define the missing element is not easy ; we may call it backbone, fecundity of imagination, knowledge of life, anything we please, without hitting the true shade of meaning. It seems to correspond in the mental sphere to health and spirits in the physical ; and these blessings Mr. Stevenson was doomed to enjoy in very scanty measure. Not that he was morbid in the worst sense of the term. The doctrine he preaches is that of duty and courage, and it was the doctrine which he carried systematically and

strenuously into practice. Yet even when he preaches it most forcibly it comes to us with the unmistakable air of the closet, not to say the hot-house.

If there is any substantial foundation for the view which has just been advanced—and to the "common Stevensonian" that view must needs appear to be rank and inexcusable heresy—it will naturally follow that the really noteworthy and precious addition made by Mr. Stevenson to our literature consists of those works in which a *soupçon* of the flavour of the lamp, a hint of pose, a strain of affectation, instead of being incongruous or disagreeable, are absolutely indispensable ingredients. It is in these that we get the true, the original, the essential, Stevenson; it is there that we find what no other writer has to bestow. Applying this stringent test, what shall we have left? We shall have the *New Arabian Nights* and the stories collected with them, such as *The Pavilion on the Links*, *A Lodging for the Night*, *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*, and *Providence and the Guitar*; we shall have *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881); we shall have *Prince Otto*; we shall have the *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882); we shall have *Memories and Portraits* (1887); we shall have the dramas written with Mr. Henley, *Deacon Brodie*, *Beau Austin*, and *Admiral Guinea*; and in poetry we shall have that inimitable *tour de force*, the *Child's Garden of Verses* (1885). And, having these, we shall have all of Stevenson that is choicest and best worth having, save for *Will o' the Mill* (1878), *Thrawn Janet* (1881), and one or two other tales and essays, mostly of a date comparatively early.

In these writings we perceive at its very best "the exquisite charm of manner, in which you can see that the author is happy too, and is applauding himself in his heart like a literary Little Jack Horner."[1] In one sense more artificial than his

[1] *Scots Observer*, January 26, 1889, vol. i. p. 265. The article from which these words are taken is an admirable one, and I should conjecture the author to be Mr. Lang.

later, more ambitious, and more didactic work, they are truly less so ; for the subtle aroma of freshness and of youth pervades them all, and the artifice seems to "come natural." Phrases which elsewhere would sound pedantic and far-fetched, here ring true ; and when you read how Silas Q. Scuddamore "nosed" all the cracks and openings of his famous Saratoga Trunk "with the most passionate attention," you cannot choose but acknowledge that the language is wholly in keeping with the tone of the story, and that a phraseology less *rococo* were manifestly out of place. Think, too, of the wonderful dawn in the *Sire de Malétroit's Door* :—

"The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colourless and clean, and the valley underneath was flooded with a grey reflection. A few thin vapours clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings. Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangour in the darkness not half an hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon ball, the rising sun."

Mannered, no doubt, and studded here and there with unexpected and *récherché* words like "clangour" and "incandescent." But, for that very reason, peculiarly accommodated to its context. Not a trace, either, be it observed, of the "prose-poet." And every now and then, in the midst of this brilliant writing, you chance upon some touch of nature, some flash of insight into humanity, which refreshes and soothes instead of dazzling : such, for instance, as the fine touch about James Walter Ferrier : "I have rarely had my pride more gratified than when he sat at my father's table, my acknowledged friend." But, indeed, the whole passage in *Memories and Portraits* concerning that wayward and ineffectual genius marks

the highest point of Stevenson's achievement as a writer of English prose.

A graceful fancy, a playful humour, not without a background of grimness, a nice taste of the terrible, a turn for the close observation and the satirical presentation of character; these, combined with an unerring literary tact, are the qualities for which the works I have ventured to indicate as his greatest are honourably conspicuous. The "shorter catechist" no doubt was there too, but he was kept in restraint, and never really got his horns out until the expatriation of "Hamlet."[1] Thereafter, though he continued to judge himself and his productions by as severe a standard as of yore, he learned to take himself *au sérieux*, to suffer fools gladly, to descant on morals, and to lose, bit by bit, the ironically humorous outlook upon life which had been the salt of his earlier work. What new birth of intellectual power there might have been in him, had he been spared, no one of course can conjecture with any certainty. There might have been some great and unforeseen development in the scope and depth of his accomplishment; his powers of imagination might have received a fresh accession of strength. I do not think this probable; and we may, I conceive, be reasonably confident that we should never have had from him another masterpiece like *Prince Otto*. In that irresistible romance he expended once for all, to the last penny, the stores of his peculiar genius; and Samoa was not the place in which his treasure-house could be replenished. Youth had passed away, and the world of Europe with its entrancing activities had been left behind for ever; what could the Southern Archipelago offer by way of inspiration in its stead?

How Mr. Stevenson's work will stand the test of comparison with that of his great predecessors in literature, posterity must determine for itself. But at least there can be no dispute as to

[1] By far the best summing up of Mr. Stevenson will be found in Mr. Henley's sonnet, *Apparition*, in *A Book of Verses*, 2nd ed., 1889, p. 41.

his superiority to all his contemporaries and to all his juniors—Scotland alone being brought into the account. It is not merely that he is immeasurably greater than those who have "played the sedulous ape" to *him*: the men who conceive that to escape from the commonplace, you must needs be meretricious, and that to be enthusiastic is to be choice. He is also greater from a literary point of view than the ablest of his countrymen who have betaken themselves to literature. None of these is more remarkable than James Matthew Barrie (b. 1860), who served his apprenticeship on the newspaper press, and who was the chief agent in the resuscitation of the tale of Scottish life and manners. His *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) and *A Window in Thrums* (1889) portrayed human character as it presents itself in a Scotch provincial town with great fidelity and humour, and for some mysterious reason caught the fancy of the English public to which the greater part of the dialogue must have been wholly unintelligible. *The Little Minister* (1891) pursued the same theme; but by this time Mr. Barrie had accurately gauged the taste of his readers, and the cynical disregard of true art—the studied "playing to the gallery"—which marked that romance and the drama based upon it, has been a prominent feature in all Mr. Barrie's subsequent work. No author of his capabilities condescends to write with his tongue so obviously in his cheek; and he has his reward. The truth is that Mr. Barrie's real strength lies in satire; in satire of a unique and mordant flavour, quite distinct from that of the professional satirist, but infinitely more pungent. *The Admirable Crichton* might be appealed to in proof of this assertion; and testimony scarcely less convincing will be found in the files of the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, and the *Scots Observer*, where, as his discriminating admirers are aware, much of his most characteristic writing lies concealed. Much, therefore, of his later stuff must to them appear unsatisfying: the two *Tommy* books, for example, which, in addition to much that is delightful, contain much

that is cheap and undistinguished. Nor can they readily forgive *Margaret Ogilvy* (1896), an exercise compared with which the labours of the resurrectionist are praiseworthy, and which many men (I believe) had rather lose their right hand than set themselves to attempt. Pure satire, it is true, is an alarming form of art to which the public never takes kindly either on or off the stage. The mass of mankind, like Miss Blanche Amory, must have emotions, and love to revel in "*mes larmes*"; but Mr. Barrie has already satisfied their needs with excellent results to himself. Will he not dedicate at least a portion of his time to the cultivation of the rare faculty which he possesses in so extraordinary a degree?

The vogue of Mr. Barrie's weaver-bodies and elders of the Original Secession was not long in bringing into the field a host of rivals; and the "Kailyard" School of Literature, as it has been termed, presently burst into existence. The circulating libraries became charged to overflowing with a crowd of ministers, precentors, and beadles, whose dry and "pithy" wit had plainly been recruited at the fountain-head of Dean Ramsay; while the land was plangent with the sobs of grown men, vainly endeavouring to stifle their emotion by an elaborate affectation of "peching" and "hoasting." Two writers of the class referred to stand out with especial prominence, one the *Jean qui rit*, the other the *Jean qui pleure*, of the movement. Samuel Rutherford Crockett (b. 1860) abandoned the ministry of the Free Kirk for the wider sphere of usefulness which the career of letters affords. His first effort was a collection of short stories entitled *The Stickit Minister* (1893), and this was followed up by *The Raiders* (1894), a tale of adventure, the scene of which is laid in the highlands of the South-west of Scotland. In the same year came the *Lilac Sunbonnet*, and its successors have been legion, averaging about three a year, none, however, disclosing any gift possessed by the author which had not been apparent in his earlier books, and each, rather, marking a further stage of declension in literary ability. In the *Stickit*

Minister and the *Raiders* there were unquestionably evidences of the faculty of the story-teller, of a certain rude power of imagination, and of a knack of presenting conventional character with force and spirit. Given proper care and efficient discipline, these might have become valuable servants; but they have been overwhelmed by less admirable qualities, until they now appear to be non-existent. In point of style, Mr. Crockett had never much to boast of, and he early displayed an unhappy facility for picking up the most irritating mannerisms of Mr. Kipling. But the crudeness of his writing is a comparatively trifling fault. What has seriously to be deplored is the perpetual substitution of gross and meaningless buffoonery for humour, and the presence of a rich vein of essential coarseness. These defects are conspicuous in the *Lilac Sunbonnet*, a perfect triumph of succulent vulgarity; though how nauseous it is—how skilfully it makes its appeal to some of the worst traits in the national character—no one who is not a Scot can really know.

The vulgarity of the works of "Ian Maclaren" (the Rev. John Watson, b. 1850) is less robust and blatant than that of Mr. Crockett's; but it is none the less offensive that it is more subtle and insidious. It might, indeed, be plausibly maintained that even the *Sunbonnet* is preferable to *Beside the Bonny Brier Bush* (1894), and *The Days of Auld Lang Syne* (1895), for it gives indications of vigour to which the compositions of Ian Maclaren make no pretence. Without professing to decide so nice a question of taste, we may allow that there is a perfectly distinct flavour in the work of the two authors. In Mr. Crockett we have the boisterous horseplay of the bothie; in Mr. Maclaren we have the slobbering sentiment of the Sabbath school, with a dash of "gentility." In that quality, however, he must yield precedence to the more numerous but less ambitious productions of "Annie Swan" (Mrs. Burnett Smith), which are nothing if not genteel, and which constitute an inexhaustible magazine of solecisms, well worth a cursory visit

of inspection. Of other "Kailyard" writers, it is unnecessary to mention any save "Gabriel Setoun" (Thomas Nicoll Hepburn, b. 1861), who, if he has not achieved success on such a colossal scale as the writers just mentioned, has done something to deserve it. His *Barncraig* (1893), his *Sunshine and Haar* (1895), and his *Robert Urquhart* (1896), are neither much better nor much worse than the average of contemporary books which profess to portray provincial life in Scotland. There is the due allowance of elders, and whisky, and pathos, and "wut"; but perhaps a few hints of human nature which are allowed to escape through a conventional exterior militated against their achieving a conspicuous triumph.

What the Scottish public really thought of the Kailyard writers is naturally a little difficult to decide. Of genuine and whole-hearted admirers there may have been a select circle. I should conjecture that amusement at the "facility" of the English and American public, was at least as widely spread as admiration. If the English and American public chose to pay for what they took to be accurate presentations of the Caledonian on his native heath, why, it was no business of any "brither Scot" of the author's to dispel the illusion. A few, no doubt, there were who resented this holding up of their fellow-countrymen to the ridicule and contempt of all sane and judicious human beings. And it is natural to suppose that some such feeling inspired the author of *The House with the Green Shutters*, a work whose appearance in the autumn of 1901 electrified the novel-reading world. As a matter of fact, it appears to be very doubtful whether that remarkable performance can be traced to any reaction, whether conscious or unconscious, against the Crocketts and Maclarens. George Douglas Brown [1] was born at Ochiltree, in Ayrshire, in 1869. Having proceeded to Balliol as an exhibitioner on Mr. Snell's

[1] See an article by Mr. A. Melrose in the *Bookman* for October, 1902, and one by Mr. Whibley, in *M'Clure's Magazine* for November, 1902; the latter, I am assured, a far more trustworthy account of the man.

foundation, he turned journalist when his Oxford career was over; and his work in that capacity, though thorough and painstaking, was hardly ever brilliant. A *critique* of Burns, written for *Maga*[1] on the occasion of that poet's centenary, was perhaps his most noteworthy achievement during the years of his apprenticeship. But excellent critic as he was—and the fragments of his commentary on *Hamlet*, if published to the world, may leave his eminence in that department beyond all cavil—his heart was in constructive, rather than analytical or expository, literature. He took an intense interest in the way to do everything; and the methods of fiction were for him a subject of prolonged and serious study. Thus, much of the book for which he will be remembered had been written before it took shape as a whole; and it might almost be described as the work of his lifetime.

Mr. Brown was keenly sensitive to impressions of every description. That he could reproduce them with startling vividness any reader of the *Green Shutters* will admit. There is no hint here of the conventional and the trite: here, rather, is a series of *choses vues*. And, indeed, we miss something of the point of the book if we forget that it is to a large extent autobiographical. Whether the picture of Barbie which he puts before us is an accurate representation of Scottish or Ayrshire life is immaterial: the main thing is that the author had eyes to see, and ears to hear, and that what he submits to his reader is neither more nor less than Barbie as he himself saw and heard it. The story is not cheerful; it is in parts grim and shocking. But it is never sympathetically petty or squalid, though one of its defects is an occasional obtrusion of undue *animus*. The writer is too prone to make capital out of the physical peculiarities, or even blemishes, of his characters; and the sketch of the parish minister, for example, in spite of its cleverness, is defaced by too obvious an infusion of vindictiveness. Yet the picture of the two Gourlays—father and

[1] August, 1896; vol. clx. p. 184.

son—who are, in truth, the really important personages of the book, is superb, and (we may be certain) absolutely true to life. Of the two, perhaps the son is the better. Never has a certain side of college life in Scotland been portrayed with a more vigorous and faithful hand than Mr. Brown's. It is melancholy to think that that hand lies still in death. Mr. Brown died in 1902, and we shall never know the full extent of his powers and resources. He was no mere impressionist with a gift of glib and picturesque language; and the pains he bestowed upon the *Green Shutters* entitle us to assume that success would not have meant for him the extinction of his genius. He was essentially a thoughtful man, and reading had made him, in Bacon's expression, a "full" one. He has left no immediate successor; but his intimate friend Mr. David Storrar Meldrum[1] (b. 1865), though he deals with a less gloomy and passionate side of life, gives promise of stepping into the front rank of those who endeavour to depict what they have seen in the lives of their countrymen, and not merely to repeat what a hundred others have taken at second hand from a hundred predecessors. *The Conquest of Charlotte* (1902) is sufficiently provoking in many ways. It is not by any means a "plain tale" from Kirkcaldy, and sometimes the style is *plus-quam*-Meredithian in its allusiveness and obscurity. But it has temperament and atmosphere; and in the character of Rab Cook the author, despite himself, as it sometimes appears, has achieved a triumph. He may find a solemn warning against his besetting sins in the literary career of "Benjamin Swift" (William Romaine Paterson, b. 1871), who has successfully contrived to stifle considerable natural abilities in the frantic effort to be "clever" at all costs.

Contemporaneously with the flourishing of the "Kailyard" school, we were treated to a Celtic revival or "renaissance." Its herald was Mr. William Sharp (b. 1856), a critic of some

[1] It is to Mr. Meldrum that I am indebted for the information upon which much of the above criticism is founded.

industry, who compiled an anthology under the name of *Lyra Celtica* in 1896. Its chief apostle was a mysterious being, known as "Fiona Macleod," whose *Pharais* (1894), *Mountain Lovers* (1895), *Sin Eater* (1895), and *Washer of the Ford* (1896), contain the more important part of her work. These volumes are destitute neither of charm nor merit; but, if they represent the Celt of the Western Islands as endowed with the imagination and the feelings of a poet, they also portray him as a maudlin and inefficient nincompoop. Also, they are too liberal of "word-painting," and many of the descriptions of natural scenery are quite kaleidoscopic in their colouring. To find the Celt in a more human guise we must repair to the works of Mr. Neil Munro (b. 1864), an author of too high promise and too sound performance to be identified with any little clique or coterie of writers. *John Splendid* (1898), is a good romance of the Stevensonian pattern, with abundant reminiscences of Alan Breck; *Doom Castle* (1901) is a stronger work, memorable for its sketch of the Marquis of Argyll, though disfigured by preciosity of language; and *The Shoes of Fortune* (1901), in which we make the acquaintance of Clementina Walkinshaw, is thin and unsatisfying. So far he has done nothing so good as his first book, *The Lost Pibroch* (1896), which consists of short pieces of really uncommon excellence. Here we have the very breath and atmosphere of the Highlands, and the Celt is presented to us as a man and a brother, and not as a moonstruck imbecile. What Mr. Munro is to make of the Western Islands his *Children of Tempest* will soon show. Meanwhile, he has many good years before him; and it is hard to believe that he will not be able to discover some means of bestowing his riches upon the world without having recourse to the somewhat faded convention of the novel with the doltish hero, and the heroine who begins with not a little aversion.

In the more ordinary routine of the novel, few names of distinction are to be met with. But it would be ungrateful

not to mention Mrs. Walford (b. 1845), the daughter of Mr. John Colquhoun, who wrote *The Moor and the Loch*. Her first novel, *Mr. Smith: A Part of his Life* (1874), showed a good deal more than mere promise, and combined a humour scarcely less exhilarating than Miss Rhoda Broughton's with a delicacy of handling not then generally associated with that popular writer. Since her earliest success, Mrs. Walford has written a long series of works, of different degrees of merit, but none of them wholly bad, even when a didactic purpose is too callously obtruded, and some of them displaying in a high degree those powers of minute observation which so qualify her sex for excelling in the novel of manners. Among her best books may be reckoned *Pauline* (1877), *Cousins* (1879), *Troublesome Daughters* (1880), *The Baby's Grandmother* (1885), and *A Stiff-necked Generation* (1888). The sketch in the *Baby's Grandmother* of what is sometimes called a "bounder" (it is a good-hearted one in this case) is an admirable specimen of firm and delicate workmanship. Mr. John Buchan (b. 1875) took to literature early, and a goodly number of volumes already bear his name. *Sir Quixote of the Moors* (1895) and *The Half-hearted* (1900) are two among his performances; but his talent finds most congenial occupation in such tales of the archæological-supernatural order as are collected in his *Watcher by the Threshold* (1902). Miss Jane Helen Findlater and Miss Stewart embarked on their literary career together in *The Hon. Stanbury* (1894). The former has achieved her principal success in *The Green Graves of Balgowrie* (1896); the latter, after boldly taking for her theme in *The Rhymer* (1900) the Edinburgh life of Burns, has more than justified the promise of that work by her romance of the '45, *Poor Sons of a Day* (1902).

Of poetry of the first order the closing decades of the nineteenth century in the British Isles were not prolific; or, rather, it should be said that most of it that came to light was the work of "old hands"—of hands that had made their mark

in a previous generation. Scotland, at all events, can put in no claim to be *pars magna* of any poetical movement. She had enough of minor poets and to spare; and the pious industry of Mr. Edwards has garnered the lays of the most obscure bards from the poets' corners of the most obscure provincial newspapers.[1] It is unnecessary to condescend upon the names and achievements of these minstrels; but generally it may be said that as compared with the songsters of the first Reform Bill period, they are less prone to expatiate upon the pleasures of intoxication, while equally willing to maunder over "Wee Johnnie" or "Wee Davie," as the case may be. In a higher flight of poetry a few lines of Mr. Stevenson's reach well-nigh the summit of excellence, while the verses addressed by John Nichol (*infra*, p. 676) to his wife,[2] place their author upon a much higher pedestal as a poet than any of his more formal and elaborate efforts. But the rest is sadly common-place. The present Duke of Argyll (b. 1845), was rash enough to essay a new metrical version of the *Psalms* (1877), no less meritorious than his tale, in rhymed heroics, of *Guido and Lita* (1875), or his libretto for the opera of *Diarmid* (1897). The Earl of Southesk (b. 1827) has also disclosed a turn for poetry, and his *Jonas Fisher* (1875), written in numbered stanzas of four lines, with alternate rhymes, was thought so "daring" on its first appearance as to be attributed to Robert Buchanan. Mr. John Davidson (b. 1857), a native of Barrhead, has, since he became a London journalist, published certain volumes of poetry,[3] which have caused him to be greeted with rapture as positively *the* poet of the future. They show little trace of their author's extraction, and indeed fall in well with the prevailing fashion of verse in the metropolis. But they are much preferable to such woful attempts to reproduce

[1] See *Modern Scottish Poets*, ed. Edwards, 16 vols., Brechin, 1880–97, a monument of wasted toil.

[2] They will be found in Knight's *Memoir of John Nichol*, p. 172.

[3] *Ballads and Songs*, 1894; *Fleet-street Eclogues*, 1893 and 1896; *New Ballads*, 1897; *The Last Ballad, and other poems*, 1899.

the Stevensonian prose fantasy as *Perfervid* (1890), ostensibly Caledonian in scene and character, or that astounding *faux pas*, *Earl Lavender* (1895). Probably his most successful essay has been the *Scaramouch in Naxos* (1888), which belongs to his pre-London period. Two translations from the classics deserve to be noted—the version (1886) of the *Odes* of Horace by Mr. T. R. Clark, and that of the *Idylls* of Theocritus (1894) by Mr. J. H. Hallard.

Few have sought to write verse in the vernacular with dignity or success. Even Mr. Stevenson, as has been indicated, fell short there. None, in the opinion of the present writer, can compare in this department with Mr. James Logie Robertson (b. 1846). In his *Orellana and other Poems* (1881), Mr. Robertson, it is conceived, made a false start. He attempted satire; but the satire misses fire. He had done better in an earlier volume of *Poems* (1878), wherein the octosyllabics of *Tammas Wilson* have the root of the matter in them, and he has come to his own in the *Ochil Idylls* (1891), and *Horace in Homespun* (1900), which embodies what was best in a previously published work. In these lyrics Mr. Robertson strikes the true note: his dialect is idiomatic; his humour is unostentatious yet not superficial, and he is never merely jocose, or woebegone, or noisy. His only serious rival in Scots verse is Mr. James B. Brown, who writes under the name of "J. B. Selkirk," and whose *Poems* (1869, 1883, and 1896) make highly agreeable reading.

In philosophy and theology the years we are now dealing with have been tolerably productive, and the establishment by the late Lord Gifford of the Lectureship known by his name has provided a common meeting-ground for the two subjects. Those indeed who are disposed to deride "natural religion" may extract some amusement from that liberal foundation, for it has happened at least once that in the four University towns of Scotland four different lecturers were simultaneously enunciating principles which nó human ingenuity can prevent from

being mutually destructive. A considerable proportion of the theologico-philosophical output of the time might be summed up by a cynic as a bold attempt to pour new wine into old bottles; in other words, to remove the substratum of fact upon which Christianity has hitherto been thought to rest, and yet to retain the ethical superstructure with the familiar associations, the familiar turns of thought, and the familiar vocabulary. This is particularly true of those philosophers who have espoused that "neo-Hegelianism" which is chiefly associated with the name of Mr. T H. Green. Of these, one of the most forcible, as well as the most typical, is undoubtedly Mr. Edward Caird (b. 1835), formerly Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, and now Master of Balliol. His more important works—to wit his two expositions of the *Philosophy of Kant* (1878 and 1889) and his *Evolution of Religion* (1893)—add to hard thinking a lucid and attractive style of exposition. But nowhere is his method more happily illustrated than in a much smaller book on the *Religion and Social Philosophy of Comte* (1885), a singularly thorough and searching piece of criticism considering its size. To the same school of thought belonged William Wallace (1837–97),[1] Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford, about whose rugged personality there hung a singular charm; and David George Ritchie (1853–1903),[2] Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews, who perhaps might have achieved something more solid than several volumes of essays, if he had read less, and concentrated his energies more on some particular branch of political philosophy, the subject that attracted him most.

The chair of Hamilton and Fraser is at present worthily occupied in Edinburgh by Andrew Seth Pringle Pattison

[1] See his *Prolegomena* to his translation of the *Logic* of Hegel (1892–94); the posthumous *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology* (1899); and the little S.P.C.K. work on *Epicurus* (1882).

[2] See his *Principles of State-Interference* (1891), *Natural Rights* (1895), and *Studies in Political and Social Ethics* (1902).

(b. 1856), who won his spurs by an exposition of the philosophical views of Thomas Reid.[1] His speculative attitude may be inferred from a collection of papers entitled *Man's Place in the Cosmos* (1897), and may be fairly described as strongly hostile to the materialistic views of which Mr. Herbert Spencer is the great apostle. It is indeed a somewhat curious fact that the "Synthetic Philosophy," as it is pretentiously termed, has found practically no support in the Scottish Universities, except from Alexander Bain, and he belongs to a byegone generation.[2] A distinguished Aberdonian, and pupil of Bain's, George Croom Robertson (1842–92),[3] did indeed profess a system of hedonism, but the sphere of his work was the University of London, and the chair he filled had been founded by George Grote. He was the first editor of *Mind*, a quarterly periodical founded in 1876, which opened its pages to all schools of thought, and was also the author of a masterly summary of the life and work of *Hobbes* (1886) in the "Philosophical Classics" series.

Mr. Pattison's colleague, Simon Laurie (b. 1829), Professor of Education in the University of Edinburgh, is no less hostile to Empiricism, though it would probably be difficult to "label" him as a member of any one school. His *Metaphysica Nova et Vetusta* (1884) and his *Ethica* (1885), are not, it may be, attractive reading to the general, but they have established their author's claim to consideration in the world of philosophical inquiry. An equal enthusiast with Mr. Laurie in the cause of education, Thomas Davidson (1840–1900), led the life of a wandering scholar, abandoning his native Buchan for the United States of America. His erudition is said to have been prodigious, and his contributions to periodical literature were frequent; but a perusal of his little

[1] See his *Scottish Philosophy*, 1885, 3rd ed., 1899.

[2] In the press it has found a persistent advocate in Mr. Hector Macpherson, of the *Edinburgh Evening News*, whose *Herbert Spencer* (1900) gives a clear and well-balanced view of that gentleman's system.

[3] See his *Philosophical Remains*, ed. Bain and Whittaker, 1894.

work on *Aristotle* (1892) suggests a doubt whether he was not apt to lose sight of such of the phenomena presented by the subject of his investigation as did not happen to suit the thesis which for the time being he was ardently supporting.[1] Philosophy can also boast of two brilliant amateurs in the persons of Mr. Arthur James Balfour (b. 1848) and Mr. Richard Burdon Haldane (b. 1856).

A share of the *patois* of the Neo-Hegelians has been appropriated by a school of writers, chiefly belonging to the Free Church, who combine a maximum of unction with a minimum of what, in the age of Chalmers and Candlish, would have been accounted essential belief. They have much to tell us of "fresh religious intuitions," of "a passion for righteousness," and of the "civic sense"; and, roundly inveighing against dogma, though subscribers of the formula of their denomination, they endeavour so to restate ancient truths that they may commend themselves to that singular organ "the modern conscience." Long, indeed, is the road they have traversed since the days of the middle-Victorian Broad Church movement; and eager is the appetite with which they gulp down the arbitrary speculations of Teutonic or Batavian criticism. The most sceptical member of the band was Alexander Balmain Bruce (1831–99),[2] whose teaching is not readily distinguishable from Socinianism. In his scheme of Christianity, the Incarnation (as traditionally understood), the Resurrection, and the Ascension, appear to have little or no place; and even when simple matters are in question, his guidance is not easy to follow. The old divines were frequently wrong-headed and fantastical; but it may be doubted if they ever surpassed in subtlety and confusion of counsel Dr. Bruce's exposition of the

[1] For an account of Davidson, see Knight, *Some Nineteenth Century Scotsmen*, 1902. His most important work was *The Philosophical System of Rosmini*, 1882.

[2] See his *Parabolic Teaching of Christ* (1882), his *Kingdom of God* (1889), and his contributions to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

parable of the Unjust Steward. Dr. George Adam Smith (b. 1856) has earned a considerable reputation by his commentaries on the *Book of Isaiah* (1889–90) and the *Book of the Twelve Prophets* (1896–98) as well as by his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1894). His proficiency in the Hebrew tongue may be indisputable, but it is no less beyond controversy that his English is of a flamboyant and Corinthian order, more suitable to the pulpit than to the study. He appears to think that in decanting the new wine of the "higher criticism," the great thing is to give it "a head." A much superior writer, in so far as writing goes, is Dr. Marcus Dods (b. 1834),[1] who presents his message in language the equable and often dignified current of which is rarely if ever interrupted by any of those lapses into the familiar or the trivial which the "religious public" appears to love. The most erudite, as well as the most powerful intellectually, of this group was Dr. Andrew Bruce Davidson (1831–1902), than whom few in these islands stood higher as a Hebrew scholar and commentator. But from any one of these it was a melancholy descent to Henry Drummond (1851–97), whose notorious *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1883) is a masterpiece of intellectual quackery. Designed to reconcile evolution with Christianity, it forms a nauseous compound of which one-half is extremely dubious science and the other extremely dubious religion.

On the conservative, or old-fashioned, side in theology there has been nothing like a concerted attempt to counteract the influence of the innovators. The "moderate," as opposed to the innovating, party has been disorganised. It is felt that something must be yielded; but no man knows the precise amount which it will be safe to yield. That is not a frame of mind which conduces to the production of really valuable work. Yet in the field of Biblical criticism James Robertson (b. 1840), Professor of Hebrew in the University

[1] See his *Gospel according to St. John*, 1897; and his *Erasmus, and other Essays*, 1891.

of Glasgow, has combined learning with something of that cautious temperament—that indisposition to accept unverified conjectures—which should form an essential part of every critic's mental equipment ;[1] while, in the region of doctrine, William Milligan (1821–93), Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen from 1860 onwards, has expounded the facts of the *Resurrection* (1882) and the *Ascension* (1891), together with the consequences which flow from them, with great sincerity and literary power, and in complete harmony with the orthodox tradition of Christendom. It is, indeed, a singular circumstance that, while the latitudinarian movement of the middle of the nineteenth century was almost wholly confined to the Establishment among the Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, more recent efforts to revolutionise historical and traditional Christianity for the benefit of the "modern conscience" have proceeded chiefly from within the Free Church, which, not much more than twenty years ago, as we have seen, removed Dr. Robertson Smith from the office of a teacher in one of its colleges by reason of his "unsoundness" in matters of Biblical criticism. To the Establishment also belongs the greatest Scottish theologian of his generation. Robert Flint (b. 1838), after occupying the chair of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews from 1864 to 1876, was removed in the latter year to the chair of Divinity in Edinburgh, which he still holds. His *Philosophy of History*, the first part of which appeared in 1874,[1] was a colossal undertaking, which, if what remains to be carried out is anything like what has been already executed, will indeed have been worthily performed. Profound learning, extensive reading, absolute fairness, and an unerring grasp of the drift and meaning of the thinkers whom he passes in review, are characteristics of Dr. Flint's work ;

[1] See, *inter alia*, his work on *The Poetry and the Religion of the Psalms* (1898).

[2] Vol. i. of a new edition was published in 1893.

and his masculine style, studiously purged of extravagance of every sort, is rendered attractive by its very austerity. The same excellences of form and matter mark the results of those studies, the necessary prosecution of which has retarded the completion of the *Philosophy*. His *Theism* (1877), his *Anti-theistic Theories* (1879), and now his *Agnosticism* (1903), are models of what such treatises should be; and no one has shown a better example than he has in his method of controversy. It would be improper not to note that all his distinguishing merits are concentrated in his *Vico*[1] (1884), the most lucid and interesting account to be found in our language of an author whose works are somewhat out of the beat of the ordinary English student.

In history the last quarter of a century has been busy, and the Scottish History Society, founded in 1886, has done for historical research a work analogous to that which the Scottish Text Society has, since 1882, been rendering to literature.[2] There has at last been something like a thorough sifting of original documents; and, while conscious or unconscious bias has not wholly disappeared, men of every variety of view have conspired to elucidate obscure and controverted facts. Dr. Thomas Leishman (b. 1825) and Dr. George Washington Sprott (b. 1829) have done admirable service in throwing light upon the ecclesiastical history of the country;[3] and the same department of inquiry has occupied the attention of Mr. David Hay Fleming (b. 1849), who takes a very different point of view, and to whom the least suggestion of prelacy—or, rather the least hint that Presbytery in the form which

[1] In the "Philosophical Classics" series.

[2] Upon these two societies has devolved the work so well performed in the middle of the century by more or less private clubs, such as the Bannatyne, the Maitland, and the Abbotsford, all now extinct.

[3] See Dr. Sprott's *Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland* (1882); his ed. of Knox's *Liturgy* (1868, 1901); his *Scottish Liturgies of the Reign of James VI.* (1871, 1901); and Dr. Leishman's ed. of the *Westminster Directory* (1901).

pleased the Protesters or the Cameronians did not descend with an express commission from heaven—is highly distasteful. Mr. Fleming has taken a hand in the Queen Mary controversy,[1] and has found a peculiarly congenial subject for his editorial industry in the *St. Andrews Kirk Session Register*.[2] The vigorous exercise of the inquisitorial powers vested in that body evokes his genuine enthusiasm ; and in these matters he may be said to be a disciple of Dr. Alexander Ferrier Mitchell (1822–99), Professor of Ecclesiastical History in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, whose *Westminster Assembly* (1883) and *Scottish Reformation* (1900) are painstaking and laborious performances, but are not precisely remarkable for breadth of view.

Sir Henry Craik (b. 1846), the author of the best recent *Life of Swift* (1882), and the editor of a work on *English Prose* (1893–96) on the model of Ward's *English Poets*, has lately made a valuable contribution to historical literature in his *Century of Scottish History* (1901). The period with which he deals extends from the '45 to the Disruption, and nowhere else is it possible to get so good a view of the development of the country during that momentous time. His treatment of the Moderates of the eighteenth century, and their friends the philosophers, is particularly sympathetic and skilful ; and yet he does ample justice to the genius of Dr. Chalmers. Mr. Peter Hume Brown's (b. 1850) conception of history is severe, as befits the first professor of Ancient Scottish History and Palæography in the University of Edinburgh.[3] In writing the biographies of *George Buchanan* (1890) and *John Knox* (1895), he has acquired a share of their sternness ; and his *History of Scotland* (1899–1902), which has still to be completed by the appearance of a third volume, is written wholly in the spirit of the "scientific" historian :

[1] *Mary, Queen of Scots*, 1897. [2] S. H. S., 2 vols, 1890.

[3] This chair was founded by Sir William Fraser (1816–98), who made a handsome fortune by compiling the family "histories" of many noble houses in Scotland.

that is to say, the human interest is, of set purpose, eliminated, and scarce one of the memorable anecdotes or sayings which for long have formed part of Scottish history finds a place in his drab and sombre record. To impugn Mr. Brown's authority would indeed be foolish and unwarrantable; yet it is a relief to turn from him to Mr. Andrew Lang (b. 1844), who, to equal industry and research, adds a literary charm which no living writer can surpass. His *Mystery of Mary Stuart* (1901) may be more ingenious than convincing; his *Gowrie Conspiracy* (1902) may have failed to solve a problem hitherto found insoluble; but his *History of Scotland* (1900–1902), which, like Mr. Brown's still awaits completion, is wholly admirable, alike for the "detachment" of mind which the author discovers, for the play of an alert and sensitive intellect, and for the pure and graceful English in which he conveys his meaning. It seemed at one time as if Mr. Lang were minded to abandon to journalism what was meant for much higher purposes. With a correct and fastidious taste, he combined a keen sense of humour, a penetrating wit, and the lightest of hands. Much of his occasional verse is exquisite, much of his ephemeral criticism inimitable. There are few kinds of writing which he has not essayed with an astonishing measure of success. Yet it is eminently satisfactory to know that he has been led, step by step as it were, to this his greatest undertaking; and it is no undue disparagement of the high merits of Tytler and Burton to say that Mr. Lang has been able to produce what, from a literary point of view, is by many degrees the best history of his country since the *Tales of a Grandfather*.

It need scarcely be said that it was through the London, and not the Scottish, press, that Mr. Lang found his entrance into literature. For a journalist such as he there was no opening in Scotland, even in his youth, when the reviewing of the Scotch daily press was still done to some extent by experts, and not on stated days of the week "in the office." The

headquarters of the *Edinburgh* had long ago been moved to "the Row," and the *Literary Gazettes* and *Critics* which were started from time to time never lasted long. On a somewhat lower level, it was found impossible to continue even a "comic paper" of the penny Fleet Street type in Edinburgh for more than about six months. One such effort, *The Shadow* (1874), was decidedly praiseworthy, and the circumstance that its *pièce de résistance* was an elaborate burlesque of Fordun's *Scotichronicon* shows perhaps that it had not wholly lost touch of higher things. A successor, *The Modern Athenian* (1878–79), was decidedly inferior. In a more elevated sphere an attempt was once again made in 1882 to establish an organ of serious liberal thought for Scotland, not dissimilar from what the *North British* had once been. The *Scottish Review* was edited by Dr. W. M. Metcalfe (b. 1840), a scholar and antiquary who holds the charge of the South Parish in Paisley, where the *Review* was published. For eighteen years it presented to the public, once a quarter, a variety of learned and intelligent articles; but the struggle became ultimately too severe, and in 1900 it perished.

The most curious experiment, however, in journalism which these years witnessed in Scotland was the *Scots* (afterwards the *National*) *Observer*. Founded by Mr. Robert Fitzroy Bell in November, 1888, it started with a great flourish of trumpets, and in truth proposed to itself little less than a revival of the literary glories of the Scottish capital. It soon became apparent that such a project was Quixotic, or at all events premature, and Mr. William Ernest Henley was summoned from the Southern metropolis to take the helm. Then began a career which, if not protracted, was emphatically merry. The *Observer* was ruthlessly iconoclastic; and no modern idol, from Mr. Sala or Mr. G. R. Sims to Mr. Ruskin or Sir Lewis Morris, but was hurled without ceremony from its seat. It attracted few new writers from Edinburgh itself; no talent lurking in the Parliament House was unearthed and put to

usury in Thistle Street; no Jeffrey or Lockhart was forthcoming in response to the proprietor's summons. But Mr. Barrie was one of its most valuable assistants, and in the course of the five years or so of its existence, it introduced to the public much good literature, and many good men who have since made their mark in the world of journalism or letters. The greatest feather in its cap was probably Mr. Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads*, which began to appear in 1889. But it was not isolated contributions—no matter how superlative in merit—which gave the paper its character. Like all journals worth anything, it bore the impress of a master personality. All the writers tried to write like Mr. Henley; and as for Mr. Henley, not even Dickens in Wellington Street (I imagine) can have surpassed him as an omnipresent and all-pervading editor. Much that was crude and extravagant, doubtless, appeared in its columns: much that to maturer years must seem violent, ill-proportioned, and "nimious." But no contributor who looks back to those pleasant days will find anything to be ashamed of; and in the *Observer*, taken as a whole, he may well find much of which to be proud. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the whole terminology of literary and artistic criticism in this country was revolutionised through its agency; and probably few journals have exerted a greater influence in proportion to their actual circulation. For the *Scots Observer* was not popular. To the ignorant and stupid it made no appeal: it violated the dearest prejudices of the Caledonian "patriot"; it mercilessly wounded the sensibilities of "literary gents" in London; and it alarmed and puzzled the serious and moderately intelligent class who buy the sixpenny weeklies which are not devoted to gossip, nor to finance, nor to illustrations. What could the reader of the *Saturday* (already on the "down grade") make of a review which sneered at Sir Walter Besant and made game of Mr. Gosse? Or what could the patron of the respectable *Spectator* think of an organ which dared, not merely to hint, but to

asseverate with emphasis, that Mr. Ruskin as an art critic did not know his business, or that Mrs. Ward, as a purveyor of religious fiction, had scored "the failure of the season"? For these reasons the *Scots Observer* was probably never at any moment of its career within "measurable distance" of prosperity, and the change of its headquarters to London, from which much had been hoped, brought little, if any, improvement in its prospects. It finally changed hands in 1894, leaving its original proprietor perhaps a wiser, but certainly not a sadder, man. It will probably be long before a capitalist is found sufficiently sanguine to undertake a similar venture North of the Tweed.

Mr. Lang was one of the most brilliant contributors to the *Scots Observer* for a time, though he never belonged to the "inner ring"; and indeed, Scotland, which in this department generally runs at best to "gifted Gilfillans," contained only one man who could be named in the same breath with him as a literary critic.[1] John Nichol (1833–94)[2] for many years lectured in Glasgow University from the chair of English Literature. More than once he desired to exchange it for some other in which his subject would embrace rhetoric and one department or another of philosophy. But his *Bacon* (1888–89), in the "Philosophical Classics" series, remains practically his sole excursion into that neighbouring realm; and it does not compare particularly favourably either with his monograph on *Byron* (1880), or with that on *Carlyle* (1892): the latter an admirable piece of work. He may have taken the right view of the Sage or the wrong; but no one can deny the dexterity of his workmanship and the correctness and lucidity

[1] William Minto (1845–93), sometime editor of the *Examiner*, and afterwards Professor of Logic in the University of Aberdeen, though not indeed a Gilfillan, was at best a painstaking and arid critic. Mr. Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature in Glasgow, belongs to a much younger generation, and can afford to wait for some time before a just estimate of his brilliant gifts can be formed.

[2] See *Memoir*, by Professor Knight (1896).

of his style. Cursed with an exaggerated sensitiveness in all the affairs of life, Nichol was peculiarly alive to anything like bad taste or bad English. It was a rare stroke of vengeance upon his "enemies" when he found himself able, in his excellent and suggestive primer of *English Composition* (1879), to select most of his specimens of what ought to be avoided from their writings. His poetry is good up to a certain point, but somehow lacks the true fire. Not even his intimate friends—and men like Mr. Lushington, Mr. Sellar, Mr. Swinburne, and Mr. Jowett were among them—could wax enthusiastic over his *Hannibal* (1873), or *The Death of Themistocles* (1881). His best poem, as we have said, is one addressed to his wife shortly after their marriage. The truth is that his criticism is much more valuable than his verse. In the latter he may be stiff and academic; in the former he is always original and fresh. He had an instinctive horror of commonplace and cant; yet it never drove him into the fantastic or the incomprehensible. His work on *American Literature* (1882) is his most ambitious performance; but his essay (1882) prefixed to Scott Douglas's edition of *Burns* sufficiently displays all his characteristic qualities at their best.

As in previous generations, many Scots have gone south during this period to find their occupation and their bread and butter in London journalism. Some of them, like Mr. Barrie or Mr. George Douglas Brown, pass through journalism to literature; others do not; while some contrive to make literature even of their journalism. These last form necessarily but a very small band; and the most illustrious name among them is that of Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson (1847–1900),[1] with which this chapter may very well be brought to a conclusion. "Bob" Stevenson was anything rather than an easy or

[1] The "Spring-heel'd Jack" of his cousin's *Memories and Portraits*, and, *omnium consensu*, a master of the art of conversation. See Mr. Henley's account of him in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, July, 1900.

prolific writer. But when he did write, it was to some effect, for he wrote exclusively on the subject he knew best and had most at heart—pictorial and plastic art. An essay on Rubens, an all too brief treatise on *The Art of Velasquez* (1895),[1] and the letterpress for Mr. Pennell's *Devils of Notre Dame* (1894), comprise the whole of his work that is accessible or that is not fragmentary. Yet small as is its bulk, its value is inestimable. The critic is never pugnacious or provocative ; but what he conceives to be error is rebuked and refuted the more forcibly for the calmness and dignity of his manner. Here, you feel instinctively, is a man who really cares for painting *quâ* painting, and not merely because he can connect it with some sentiment or anecdote, or can deduce from it some moral lesson. To pass from Mr. Ruskin to Mr. Stevenson is to pass from thick darkness, illuminated by dazzling flashes of rhetoric, into the peaceful radiance of a summer's morning and a clear sky. What was revolutionary doctrine when Mr. Stevenson commenced critic is probably rigid orthodoxy now. Rarely do we hear Rembrandt or Rubens or Velasquez denounced as "lost souls." The tombs of the prophets have been piously ornamented by those who would have been the first to stone them ; and the president of the Royal Academy is fain to admit that Alfred Steevens was an eminent sculptor. This may not mean very much ; and the traditions of two or three generations are not easily subverted. But if the art-criticism of to-day is, upon the whole, more intelligent than the art criticism of twenty or thirty years ago—less dull, less perverse, less obstinately blind—it is perhaps to Stevenson more than to any other single man that the improvement, such as it is, must be ascribed.

Our survey of the literature of Scotland is now at an end. It is customary, upon the completion of such a task, to indulge, by way of epilogue, in a few words of retrospect,

[1] Reprinted, with a few additions, under the title of *Velasquez*, 1899.

in which attention is drawn to the more salient features of the territory which has just been surveyed. But it is thought that these have been indicated with sufficient precision and emphasis in the course of the work ; and accordingly it is proposed instead to hazard a sentence or two of prediction, albeit prophecy is to the full as perilous an undertaking in literature as in life.

Of one thing we may be tolerably confident, and that is that we shall never witness a revival of the old Scots tongue as a medium of expression for serious thought in prose. Philosophers, historians, and men of science will adhere to the normal literary dialect, which, even in Scotland, has been, for at least a couple of centuries, the South-midland English ; and it is impossible to conceive of its being displaced by the idiom of the early Scots Acts or of Pitscottie. Every now and then attempts may be made to resuscitate the Northern English speech, but such efforts will always have the air of being burlesques, no matter how solemn the topic treated of may be.[1]

Nor is it possible to anticipate a much brighter future for the literary Doric in the region of poetry. Its resources as regards verse appear to be exhausted, and all its conventions have been worn to a thread. Everything has the air of a more or less—and generally a less—skilful imitation of Burns. Burns himself, as we have seen, was not "original" in the sense of having founded a new school of poetry. He was rather the consummation of an old one ; and for that very reason he presents an insuperable obstacle to the triumph of those who also would fain be disciples. It was easy for him to borrow from Ramsay and from Fergusson, and to improve upon what he borrowed. It is also possible for later genera-

[1] This criticism is peculiarly applicable to certain modern renderings of portions of Scripture into broad Scots : to none more so than to Mr. W. W. Smith's version of the New Testament (Paisley, 1901), the effect of which is ludicrous and therefore disagreeable in the extreme.

tions to borrow from Burns; but who is to improve upon him? The plain truth is that the language in which he wrote has ceased to be a literary vehicle for intense and genuine emotion. And thus, while his cheaper and more sentimental pieces provide congenial models for those whose feelings have always an infusion of the self-conscious and the second-hand, we may suspect that any modern compatriot with a true lyrical gift would seek some other mode of displaying it than the methods which Burns has made immortal. A clearly marked separation between the current spoken and written dialect of a people may in some respects be a misfortune, but it is a phenomenon which may be remarked in other countries than Scotland, and in other ages than our own.

The chief link between the vernacular and the literary (or what passes for such) is now the novel or tale, in which some, or all, of the characters discourse in broad Scots. It might be pardonable to imagine that this form of art, too, is "played out"; but the rashness of the supposition becomes apparent from a consideration, first, of the vitality of the *genre*, which blossoms forth anew at intervals of about twenty years; and, secondly, of the potentialities of the material with which it deals. It is difficult to exhaust the possibilities of any considerable section of human society, from the novelist's point of view. To the seeing eye fresh combinations will ever be apparent; new things will continue to be made familiar and familiar things to be made new. The "Kailyard" writers, after all, have touched a mere fringe of the population. They have left little, it is true, to be said of precentors and beadles. But nowadays beadles and precentors form a comparatively small fraction of a tolerably numerous community; and even if the "landward" portion of the people can yield nothing more (which is extremely doubtful) the "burghal" portion has hitherto scarcely been handled at all. Some day, perhaps, a writer will arise with humour and observation, who can be

amusing without being "jocose," and sympathetic without being maudlin, and who can write of Scottish life and character with a minimum of the dreary old wit about ministers and whisky.[1] Perhaps, too, by the date of his appearance some one else may have realised the immense amount of stuff, as yet practically untouched and lying ready to the novelist's hand, in the life of the Scottish professional, commercial, and middling classes. A Balzac would be unnecessary; a second Miss Ferrier would suffice, with Miss Ferrier's acrimony a little mollified, though with all her keen scent for absurdities and foibles unimpaired. The tone would have to be pitched low, and melodrama would have to be rigorously eschewed. The characters would talk, not in Scots, but in Scotticisms; and the works of such a writer would be a valuable repertory of those engaging idioms. Some obloquy he would infallibly incur in the conscientious discharge of his duty; for his localities and personages would be sure to be identified (however unjustly) with actual places and human beings. But he would probably reap a fairly substantial reward, to say nothing of the pleasure inseparable from working a new and rich vein of character and manners.

As regards the intellectual future of the country generally there is certainly no apparent cause for gloom; and this forecast might be expressed in more positively sanguine terms if there were any prospect of a diminution in the national failings of self-consciousness and vanity. The tendency to reckon all Caledonian geese as swans and to lose a just sense of proportion in a rapture of patriotic enthusiasm is, of course, assiduously fostered by the public press. It were cruel and short-sighted to discourage so useful a virtue as local patriotism.

[1] This not very lofty ideal has to some extent been realised in an unpretending, but excellent, *brochure* entitled *Wee MacGreegor* (Glasgow, 1902). There are no beadles, nor is there any drink, in it; and the dialect of the West is reproduced with what I am told is astonishing fidelity.

No one would select the village of Bowden as a suitable place for delivering a diatribe against Thomas Aird, nor journey to Kirkintilloch for the express purpose of disparaging David Gray. But what is commendable in a parish may be unbecoming in a nation; and few impartial observers would deny that too strong a tincture of the merely parochial is often perceptible in our ebullitions of national self-satisfaction. To boast vociferously of the number of responsible and lucrative appointments held by Scotsmen in the British Empire may be natural. But it is not exactly dignified; and a readiness to accept or tolerate the most flagrant "Kailyard" or "Whistlebinkie" because of the country of its inspiration may, with habitual indulgence, degenerate into a serious fault. The achievements of the Scottish nation in the arts of war and peace are assuredly not so insignificant as to make it necessary for its members to obtrude them, in season and out, upon the notice of an amused and admiring world; and, in particular, there is little need for nervous apprehension that what is best and greatest in our literature will be forgotten by anybody whose remembrance is worth having. If a portion of our literary record has at times fallen into comparative obscurity, much of the blame rests with those who have exercised no discrimination in the apportionment of their extravagant praises, as well as with those who have so puffed out and magnified the figure of Burns as to intercept the light of cordial recognition from his predecessors.

If this besetting weakness, then (together with certain others, such as a "love of rhetoric, and admiration for bad models"[1]) could by any possibility be corrected, a decided improvement would be wrought in the national habit of mind. But even though (as may well be feared) it should prove too deeply-seated to be eradicable, there is no call to despair. One circumstance, at all events, is of happy omen for the future. The conditions of Scottish life and society seem almost to preclude the possibility

[1] Mr. Sellar to Mr. Nichol, *apud* Knight's *Memoir* of the latter, p. 225.

of the existence of a distinctive literary class or caste in Scotland. To foster the growth of such a class the environment of a huge capital appears to be essential. Edinburgh is fortunately still too small to provide the requisite atmosphere and surroundings ; nor is it easy to imagine that they will ever be found in the "second city of the Empire." Such a thing as a literary caste has, in truth, never existed in the Scottish metropolis. In the age of Robertson and in the age of Scott (as in the seventeenth century), the great men of letters had each his profession. They were lawyers, or professors, or clergymen, or doctors, as the case might be. Much as we may regret the glories of those memorable epochs we may at least rejoice that there are no symptoms of the growth of a body of men prepared to maintain that the practice of literature should be reserved for a self-elected coterie of experts, and to deprecate the criticism of outsiders and "amateurs" with a shrill cry of "*Procul este profani.*"

Another hopeful indication lies in the fact that at few periods in their history, probably, have the Scottish Universities been better manned or more efficient than they are to-day. There is no reason why this happy state of matters should not be indefinitely prolonged, provided that two preliminary conditions are satisfied. The bounty of benevolent, but injudicious, millionaires must be directed into the proper channels, and the absurd claim of the successful "business man" as such to prescribe a curriculum of University study must be summarily repelled. The cult of the "useless" must be sedulously prosecuted, and the standards of the counting-house and the market-place must be firmly rejected when they attempt, in a seat of learning, to supplant the traditions inseparably associated with the idea of a liberal education. These indispensable conditions complied with, we may be sure that the Universities will continue to turn out men well fitted for attaining distinction in prose-literature : in scholarship, in philosophy, in history, in science. The national standard of

comfort is immeasurably higher, and wealth is much more widely distributed, than of old ; yet there is no solid ground for believing in the degeneracy of the race, or for supposing that the supply of intelligent, hard-headed, and hard-working men is sensibly diminishing. Genius, indeed, is another matter. For genius no man can be answerable. Its ways are not as our ways ; its spirit bloweth where it listeth ; and no "system of national education," however well-devised in theory or serviceable in practice, can do anything to affect its production or much to affect its development.

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GLOSSARY

A per se, an extraordinary or incomparable person.
Aboif, above.
Ail wosp, a bunch of straw hung at a tavern door.
Air, previously.
Air, heir.
Alanerly, only.
Alkin, every sort.
Als, also.
Anamalit, enamelled.
Anerdancis, adherents.
Anerdar, adherent.
Anerly, only.
Annaly, alienate.
Anneuche, enough.
Areir, back, gone.
Ark, meal girnel.
Assyith, indemnify.
At, that.
Attour, over, across, about.
Aumrie, cupboard.
Awin, own.

Baird, bard.
Bairdit, adorned with trappings.
Bak, bat.
Band, bond, agreement.
Bankouris, hangings, coverings.
Bap, roll, thick cake or scone.
Bar, boar.
Bardie, bold, insolent.
Basnat, helmet.
Bayne, prepared.
Beft, beaten, knocked.
Beir, noise, cry.
Bene, splendidly.
Beriall, beryl.
Berling, a galley.
Berne, child, fellow.
Besene, fitted, furnished.
Bet, mended.
Between hands, in the intervals.
Bewis, boughs.
Beyne, been.
Beyne, pleasant, genial.
Big, to build.
Bill, writing, letter.
Bink, bynk, bench.
Birkin bobbins, the seed-pods of the birch.
Biz, to make a hissing noise.
Bla, blue.
Blad, a large piece.
Blak-moir, blackamoor.
Blate, shy.
Bleir, grow thin, starve.
Blenk, glance, glimpse.
Blerit, dimmed.
Bogill, spectre, scare-crow.
Bogle-bo, peep-bo.
Boit, boat.
Booring, boring.
Bottouns, boots.
Bourd, a jest.
Boustous, huge.
Bow, a boll, a dry measure used for corn.
Bown, to make ready.
Brachen, gruel.
Brank, curb.
Brash, effort, attack.
Brecham, a horse-collar.
Breid, breadth.
Breid, on, spread out.
Broad-band, to lay in, to expose.
Browderit, embroidered.
Brukill, brittle, variable.
Brulyie, fight.
Brusit, embroidered.
Brymly, fiercely.
Buckie, shell-fish.
Buird, board, table.
Burely, stately.
But, without.
By-hand, out of the way.
Byrd, behoved.
Byrdyng, burden.
Byrse, bristles, beard.
Bysyn, monster, degraded thing.

Caird, pedlar, tinker, vagrant.
Callour, caller, fresh.
Campion, campioun, champion.
Cant, merry.
Cap-out, "no heel-taps."

Capernoity, peevish, irritable.
Capill, nag.
Carling, a rude old woman
Carp, to speak.
Cassay, causeway.
Cassin, thrown.
Castock, the core of a stalk of colewort or cabbage.
Cautel, caution.
Celicall, heavenly.
Chaftis, chops, jaws.
Chaip, Schaipe, escape.
Chaipes, established rate or price.
Chalmer, chamber.
Chancy, lucky.
Chap, to knock.
Chappin, a quart.
Chat, hang.
Cheiss, choose.
Cher, cheer, mien, state of the spirits.
Cherbukle, carbuncle.
Chitterlilling, pig's entrails, contemptible person.
Chymlay, grate, brazier.
Chyre, chair.
Clanjamfrey, disreputable crew.
Clarty, Clatty, dirty.
Clash, gossip, talk.
Cleik, hold.
Cleik, number.
Clekit, reproved.
Clekkit, hatched.
Clok, a beetle.
Cloutit, patched.
Clovin Robbyns, broken men or ruffians.
Comonying, communing, conversation.
Compt, to account.
Coor, cover.
Cop, cowp, cup.
Corss, body.
Cost, side.
Couthe, could.
Cowth, well known.
Craker, one who gossips.
Creddens, credit.
Creinge, shrug.
Crowdie, gruel or porridge.
Cruif, a contrivance for catching salmon.
Cruppen, crept.
Cry cok, also **crauch,** cry "beaten."
Crynis, diminishes.
Culroun, rascal.
Cummer, companion, gossip.
Cunning, rabbit.
Cwnnandly, cunningly, skilfully.

Dai, a sloven.
Damais, damask.
Dantit, daunted.
Dasying, stupefying.
Dawted, indulged, petted.
Decoir, decorate.
Decupla, a kind of musical harmony.
Ded, death.
Degest, grave, composed.
Deid, death.
Deme, condemn.
Dern, secret.
Derne, darkness.
Derrest, dearest.
Desie, daisy.
Dicht, make ready, array.
Diligat, delicate.
Ding, Dyng, hit, knock.
Dinsome, noisy.
Disjone, breakfast.
Dissait, deceit.
Dissavabill, deceitful.
Disteynyeid, out-distanced, excelled.
Dok, breech.
Dother, daughter.
Doutsum, doubtful.
Dowbill, double.
Dowff, depressed, gloomy.
Dowkit, ducked.
Drammock, a mixture of meal and water.
Dregy, dirge.
Dring, to sing in a slow, melancholy manner.
Dud, a rag.
Dunt, a large piece.
Dyiss, dice.
Dyte, composition.
Dyvour, bankrupt.

Effeir, to belong to.
Efftyr, afterwards.
Ellys, else.
Engyne, genius, intellect.
Enteress, entrance.
Erdly, earthly.
Ess, ease.
Ettercap, a quarrelsome, pugnacious person.
Eviredeille, in every part.
Evitit, avoided.
Exercitioun, putting into practice.
Exiltree, axletree.
Eydent, industrious.

Fa, lot, chance.
Facund, eloquence.
Failzhe, fail.
Faind, missed.
Fairnyear, last year.
Fangit, caught, seized.
Fard, to embellish.
Farle, a thin cake made of oatmeal.
Fars, to stuff.
Fasoun, fashion.
Fastlingis, almost.
Fayis, foes.
Fechtand, fighting.
Feid, feud, enmity.

Feill, understanding.
Feill, many.
Feir, in, together, in company.
Felloune, great.
Fend, feynd, fiend.
Fensum, offensive.
Fenze, to feign, to dissemble.
Ferd, fourth.
Fere, companion, consort.
Ferly, wonderfully.
Fetrit, fastened.
Feyr, fare.
Fleesh, fleece.
Fleggar, flatterer.
Fleich, to beg with importunity.
Flemit, driven forth.
Flet, the inner part of a house.
Fleyd, frightened.
Flouk, a flounder.
Flyte, to scold.
Fog, turf.
For-thi, therefore.
Forworthin, wasted, useless.
Fow, full.
Fowmart, polecat.
Fowsea, fosse, moat.
Fowth, size, strength, plenty.
Frek, a strong man.
Frethit, liberated.
Frog, doublet.
Frosnit, frost-bitten.
Prusch, to break.
Fud, tail.
Fulyery, leaved work.
Fume, foam, froth.
Fure, fared.
Fyellis, round towers.
Fyschit, fixed.

Gailyiounis, galleys.
Gaitis, goats.
Gapping, gaping.
Gappock, gobbet, morsel.
Gawsy, plump, well-fed.
Geir, money, moveable property.
Geraflour, gillyflower.
Girnall ryver, breaker of meal-chests.
Girse, girss, grass.
Glaster, to bawl.
Gleib, portion.
Gleit, shine.
Gloir, glory.
Glois, glose, the act of warming one's self at the fire.
Glowmyng, scowling.
Goilk, gowk, cuckoo.
Gooms, gums.
Gowdspink, goldfinch.
Gowly, knife.
Gowp, gulp, mouthful.
Grathit, adorned.
Gre, reward.
Greissis, graces.
Grenis, groans.
Grew, shudder.
Grit, great.
Gros, rude.
Groufflingis, stooping.
Gudlingis, base metal.
Guschet, that part of the armour defending the armpit.
Gyfand, giving.
Gympt, slim.
Gyng, gang, company.
Gyrd, let, attacked, "went for."

Habuilyement, habiliment, clothing.
Habyll, qualified.
Haiff, have.
Hair, high, or cold.
Halffitis, cheeks.
Hals, neck.
Haltand, halting, lame.
Havins, conduct.
Heisit, hoisted.
Herreit, harried, plundered.
Hetterent, hatred.
Heuch, bank, crag.
Hevaloghe, heave-a-low, an exclamation.
Hewin, heaven.
Heynd, person.
Hidlis, hiding-places.
Hing, hang.
Hirnis, corners.
Hoat, hot.
Hoill, whole.
Hoilsum, wholesome.
Holtis, high ground.
Hooly, cautiously.
How, hollow.
Howff, haunt.
Howis, houghs.
Howk, to dig.
Howm, the low ground near a stream.
Hoyt, suitable.
Hurcheon, hedgehog.
Huttok, high cap.

Iceschoklis, icicles.
Impnis, hymns, poems.
Indoce, indorse.
Ingle, fire, fireside.
Inviet, envied, hated.
Ischit, issued.

Jad, a jade.

Kail, broth.
Ke, jackdaw.
Kebuck, cheese.
Keist, cast.
Kell, a woman's cap or head-dress.
Kep, to catch.
Ket, a hairy fleece.
Kipper, a spawning salmon.
Kirsp, fine linen.

Kist, chest.
Kittle, ticklish.
Kittle, to tickle.
Knap, to crack.
Knap, to speak in a clipping or mincing manner.
Kye, cows, cattle.
Kyl, kiln. **The kyl's on fire**, a phrase used to denote any great tumult or combustion.
Kyrnellis, battlements.
Kythit, manifested.

Laif, rest.
Lair, learning.
Laitis, manners, behaviour.
Lak, blame.
Langand, belonging to, regarding.
Langsumnes, longwindedness.
Lappered, coagulated, curdled.
Lardon, trick, deception.
Laser, leisure.
Lauch, law.
Lautee, loyalty.
Lave, rest, remainder.
Le, peace, tranquillity.
Leglin, milk-pail.
Leid, language.
Leid, lead.
Leidsterne, guiding star.
Leifis, lives.
Leiff, leave.
Leisome, lawful.
Leister, to spear fish.
Lemman, sweetheart, lover.
Lesingis, lying tales, lies.
Lest, please.
Leth, disgust.
Leuch, laughed.
Levys, lives.
Liff, life.
Lingle, shoemaker's thread.
Linkand, walking at a good pace.
Lorimer, saddler.
Lounder, to beat, strike.
Lowin', burning.
Lucerne, lamp.
Luckan gowan, the globe flower.
Lufe, love.
Luiche, laughed.
Luifar, lover.
Luntin', smoking.
Lyart, faded.
Lynde, lime-tree.
Lynkome, Lincoln green fabric.
Lyre, flesh.

Ma, more.
Maill, rent, dues.
Makar, poet.
Mauch, full of maggots.
Maukin, a hare.
Mawsey, a stout woman.
Mayne, strength.
Mayss, makes, causes.
Meary, merry.
Meid, meadow.
Meir, mare.
Mell, to meddle.
Menseless, destitute of discretion.
Menys, means.
Menzhe, troop.
Messe, mass.
Met, measure.
Mett, in measure.
Milhouse, mint.
Moniplyes, tripes.
Moop, nibble.
Mort, dissolute woman.
Mow, joke.
Muldrie, moulded work.
Munyeoun, minion, darling.
Murionit, made faces at.
Myth, to measure.

Na war, were it not.
Nakyn, no kind of.
Nappy, strong ale.
Nay. This is no nay = there is no denying it.
Neapkyn, napkin, pocket-handkerchief.
Nechyr, whinny.
Neff, fist.
Netherit, oppressed, kept down.
Nicht, approached, came nigh to.
Noghtyeless, nevertheless.
Nolt, cattle.
Norist, nourished.
Nowt-feet, ox-feet.
Noyand, molesting.
Nyxt, next.

Oblissit, obliged, under obligation.
Oe, grandchild.
On forse, of necessity.
Orra things, odds and ends.
Osan, Hosannah.
Ostir dregar, oyster dredger.
Our, over.
Outane, besides.
Outher, either.
Oxter, armpit.
Oysyd, used.

Pace, pasche, Easter.
Padyane, pageant.
Panis, pains.
Panssit, thought, meditated.
Parosch, parish.
Partan, crab.
Peax, peace.
Peilit, stripped.
Perqueir, off-hand.
Pig, jelly-can, crockery.
Plak, a small coin.
Plat, stroke, blow.

Platt, plan, model.
Pleid, debate, cry.
Pless, please
Plet, folded.
Pliskie, plight.
Pock, bag.
Poill, pole.
Pose, hoard of money, purse.
Pouerall, the masses, the populace.
Pow-sowdie, sheep's-head broth.
Preifit, proved, tried.
Prene, pin.
Prevene, surpass.
Pringnant, pregnant.
Prodissioun, treachery.
Prwneis, plumes or adorns itself.
Puddock, frog.
Pur, poor, poor thing.

Quaiff, coif.
Quair, book.
Queff, quaich, drinking cup.
Quhele, wheel.
Quhill, till.
Quiklie, vividly.
Qweir, choir.

Rad, afraid.
Raffel, doeskin.
Rak, reck, matter.
Rak sauch, twisted willow.
Rake, to rub.
Rane, persistent cry.
Rax, reach, fetch.
Ream, cream, froth.
Rease, rose.
Redder, peace-maker.
Rede, to explain, unfold.
Regiment, government.
Rehator, enemy.
Reid, counsel.
Reid, red.
Rerd, roar.
Reset, receiving stolen goods.
Resortis, the mechanism of an organ.
Ring, reign.
Roch, rough, hoarse.
Rock, rok, a distaff.
Rois, rose.
Rombyloghe, rumbelow, an exclamation.
Ronnis, brambles, thickets.
Ropeen, croaking.
Ross, rose.
Rost, roast.
Rottle, rattle.
Roune, writing, or narrative.
Roup, sale by auction.
Rowmit, roamed, perambulated.
Rowp, croak.
Roy, king.
Rude, cheeks, the part of the face which is red.
Rug, pull.
Ruse, boast.
Ryg-bane, backbone.
Ryne, stream.

Saipheron, saffron.
Sakless, innocent.
Sals, sauce.
Sanctis, saints.
Sarde, vexed, galled.
Sasteing, pole.
Saulie, a mute, an undertaker's man.
Saull, soul.
Scadlips, broth, with a small quantity of barley in it.
Scaw'd, faded.
Schand, bright.
Sched, divided, parted.
Scheitting, cheating.
Schene, shining, beautiful.
Schir, sir.
Scho, she.
Schog, shake.
Schor, threaten.
Scowthered, scorched.
Screen, shawl.
Schupe, undertook.
Schyre, wholly.
Segge, man.
Seill, happiness.
Seirsit, devised.
Sekirly, assuredly.
Sekkis, sacks.
Sesqui altera, a particular stop in an organ.
Sessoun, season, seasoning.
Sesyt, seized, taken.
Sichit, sighed.
Singis, signs.
Singles, small coins.
Siss, times.
Site, shame.
Skaild, scattered, fragmentary.
Skair, share.
Skelf, shelf.
Skink, drink.
Skowt, a boat or coble.
Sle, skilful, cunning.
Slidder, slippery.
Slim, worthless.
Slop, slap.
Smorit, smothered.
Sneeshin' mill, snuff-box.
Sons, sonce, abundance.
Sowens, flummery.
Sownyng, sounding.
Spail, splinter.
Spass, space, room.
Speir, ask.
Spelden, a dried haddock.
Spell, tell.
Spence, parlour, pantry.
Spenser, butler.
Spynist, in full blossom.
Stant, duty, task.
Stawe, stole away.
Stede, place.

Steik, shut, close.
Steing, pole.
Sterne, star.
Stevin, voice.
Stob, stab.
Stog, stiff, stout.
Stowing, accommodation.
Stowth, stealing.
Straik, stroke.
Straitis, a kind of coarse, woollen cloth.
Stramash, disturbance.
String, restraint.
Stummerit, stumbled.
Styng, pole.
Sua, swa, so.
Sucker, sugar.
Suddart, soldier.
Sumph, fool.
Sunkets, food, provisions.
Suppleis, punishment.
Supplie, assistance.
Sussie, hesitation.
Sutor, cobbler.
Swats, new ale.
Swnyeis, excuses.
Swouchand, "soughing."
Swyth, quickly.

Ta, take.
Tait, a small portion.
Tak, lease.
Tapsalteerie, topsy-turvy.
Tartan, pudding made of red colewort mixed with oatmeal.
Tarveal, fatigue.
Tasker, a labourer paid by the task or piece.
Tauch, tallow.
Tawpie, a foolish woman.
Tawted, matted.
Tent, attend to.
Thocht, though.
Thole, bear, endure.
Thraw, to become distorted.
Thrinfald, threefold.
Through, bundle.
Thrummy-tailed, with fringed or frayed petticoat.
Thyne, this place.
Tite, soon.
Tod, fox.
Tome, empty.
Toist, toast.
Toore, tower.
Tout, toot, blast.
Tow, hemp prepared for spinning.
Trance, passage, lobby.
Trew, trewis, truce, armistice.
Trogged, dressed like vagrants.
Trou, trow, believe in.
Trought, through.
Trymmil, to tremble.
Tuerittis, turrets.
Tuitch, touch.
Tulye, skirmish, quarrel, turmoil.
Turs, to carry off.
Twichestane, touchstone.
Tyne, to lose.

Udir, other.
Ugsum, ugly, repulsive.
Uneis, with difficulty.
Unsell, wretched.
Uplands, upolandis, rude, rustic.

Varnasyng, provision, store.
Ver, worse.
Viss, wise. **On na viss**, in no wise.
Vitht, together.
Volvis, wolves.
Vorschip, valour.
Voundir, wonder.
Vran, wren.

Waillis, walls, bulwarks.
Wait, wot, know.
Wale, pick, choice.
Walk, wauk, to be awake.
Walker, fuller.
Wally, ample large.
Wally, trinket, gew-gaw.
Wanchancie, unlucky.
Wapynnis, weapons.
Waught, a large draught.
Waw, wall.
Wedy, wuddie, halter, gallows.
Weill, eddy.
Wis, wish.
Woage, voyage, enterprise.
Wobster, weaver.
Wod, mad.
Worth, became.
Wreuch, wretched.
Wss, use.
Wyly coyt, a short jacket or coat worn under the vest.
Wyrreit, strangled.

Yan, than.
Yeid, went.
Yett, gate.
Ynewcht, enough.
Yow, ewe.
Yow, you.
Yowff, a smart blow.
Yude, went.

Zeemsel, keeping.
Zeirdit, buried.
Zerne, move.
Zharnit, desired.
Zung, young.

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